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County Life

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Santa Claus waves during the Rotary Community Christmas Party "Drive-Thru" Edition on Saturday, Dec. 5 at Curry Chevrolet in Haliburton. The event was made possible due to the efforts of the Rotary Club of Haliburton, the Haliburton and District Lions Club, the BIA, Curry Chevrolet and and an army of more than 20 volunteers./DARREN LUM Staff

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St. Clair and Diana Cleveland welcome the public to see their Christmas display at their home on Unicorn Road in Haliburton, which includes more than 10,000 lights. St. Clair said his effort for the display begins in August, testing all the bulbs. They encourage visitors to bring a non-perishable food item with them so they can donate it to the local food bank./DARREN LUM Staff

Getting into the spirit with Christmas lights display

SUE TIFFIN
County Life Staff

In September each year, Rev. St. Clair Cleveland gets outside and starts working on the lawn display that he and wife Diana plan to light in November, a tradition they have been keeping up for nearly 50 years, even before they lived in Haliburton.

"It's a lot of work," said Diana. "It keeps him busy."

Last year the couple collected around 100 pounds of food for the food bank at their front lawn scene on Unicorn Road, and this year they're hoping to do more. The display this year includes a little red truck with a Christmas tree in it, and a reindeer scene.

"Every year he adds something else," said Diana. "We had a carousel on the go, but that bad storm we had a couple of weeks ago twisted it and wrecked it completely. So he has to change that design for next year."

While Diana decorates inside, she also helps St. Clair with his outdoor display, assisting him by painting some of the decorations.

"We work at it together," she says.

The pair also decorated when they lived in Hamilton and Burlington, but Diana notes the space they have now makes for the greatest display.

"Now he's got a bigger area so he can go crazy," she laughed. "It keeps him out of trouble.

Last year the display cost about $200 in total to keep lit, with LED lights that help keep the cost down, and which Diana says is worth it because "it's our fun to do."

St. Clair even snow blows the driveway and a parking area so visitors can park and take a look around.

"This year, with so much negativity going on, it's nice that people can have something they can come out and enjoy and not have to worry, and it costs them next to nothing, a can out of your cupboard or whatever," says Diana. "We've had nothing but positive feedback. The neighbours are like, 'wow, we can see you, we can hear you.'"

She laughs: "Can't see it from outer space yet though – he'll just keep going."

John Ayres of Minden didn't decorate his house before the year 2000, because he lived five kilometres down a road "in the middle of the bush, nobody would have seen them anyhow."

But when he moved to County Rd. 21 close to Hwy. 35, despite being set back from the road, his brightened house could definitely be seen.

"When you're in the house ... you could literally eat dinner at the dining room table and you don't really have to turn the light on," said John. "There's a lot of lights."

His son, Mitchell, was four when John first started turning the lights on, every year on the evening of Nov. 11, after Remembrance Day services.

"It was a family thing, even up until he was about 16 or 17 years old," said John. "It was always a family thing putting them up together."

After Mitchell left for school in Ottawa, John thought he might cut back on putting the display up – but its absence was noticed.

"I said, you know something, I'm going to start cutting back on the lights, I'm not going to do so much, because you're not going to be here and it's a lot of work for one person," said John. "So I did that, and then I got stopped probably the last week of November by somebody at the grocery store who said, 'I was by your house with my kids and you don't have your lights on yet.' And I felt guilty. And so the lights went back up."

John said when they first started putting the display up, his hydro bill reminded him of that – it cost about $300 to $400 a month to keep the lights on.

"Today they're almost all LED and you

see page 3

County Life

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'I just hope it brings a little bit of happiness for people'

from page 2

might notice an extra $5 or $10," he said. "It's no big deal anymore."

It turns out it's still a family thing after all – his three-year-old granddaughter, Elizabeth, drove with Mitchell from Parry Sound at night to see the display, which now includes an inflatable of Paw Patrol's Chase, her favourite.

"She just absolutely loves Chase, so it's a big deal," said John.

He didn't enter the Minden Hills Holiday Lights contest, because he said his display is just there for the kids. Though he's usually faced away from the windows during the evening, he said you can tell cars slow down to have a look at the bright, festive scene.

"I just hope it brings a little bit of happiness for people," said John.

Scott and Carolyn Martin moved to Minden just over three years ago, bringing with them the lighting collection that made them five-time winners of "the Griswold award" in Tottenham.

"We've probably been doing the full Griswold thing for about 15 years now," said Scott, referencing the scene in National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation in which character Clark Griswold brightens the neighbourhood with 25,000 lights on his house.

The couple's long-term plan was to move to this area, where they had been renting cottages each summer for about 20 years, and they did so three years ago this past August, with plenty of time to unpack the Christmas display.

Minden resident John Ayres said he couldn't begin to know how many bulbs he uses, but said with LED lights his hydro bill is a lot less than the years using incandescent bulbs, going from $300 a month to just $7./ DARREN LUM Staff

"The lawn in Tottenham was probably half the size this lawn is, so a lot of this stuff was crammed onto half the size, so it was really, really, bright," he said. "But it has been added to, also."

This year is the fourth Christmas season the Martins have created a holiday spectacle at their home on Bobcaygeon Road, across from the Minden Hills Cultural Centre and next to the school.

"It's my wife's fault," Scott laughs, explaining that Carolyn grew up in an area of Montreal called Verdun, where "the people there go all out," decorating three-storey walk-ups with lights, wreaths and bows.

The Martins are particularly fond of vintage blow-molds, like the plastic Santa and snowman on their lawn.

"We're always on the look-out for those," said Scott, and they've been successful in finding some at secondhand stores, garage sales, even by the side of the road waiting for garbage pick-up. "We're always trying to keep our eye out, if we see them, we snag them. It's just old-school. They're kind of disappearing. Most people use the inflatable ones or the cut-outs so it's kind of neat to keep it alive."

Around October, when the ground is still unfrozen for the stakes that hold up some of the decorations, Scott is helped by family friend Jeralyne Lynch to get the display ready.

"Without her help, it would take me days and days to do it, but she's a little Energizer bunny," he said.

This year they were blessed with a

see BRIGHTENING page 4

Minden residents Scott and Carolyn Martin's home is easily recognizable on Bobcaygeon Road with its myriad of decorations. A sign out front encourages donations to "your local food bank."/DARREN LUM Staff

Brightening up the neighbourhood this Christmas

from page 3

warmer fall season.

"Taking advantage of the weather is a big thing," said Scott. "This year we were lucky, we were putting it up in T-shirts."

And when the weather isn't so great, Scott has built the skills he needs to make things happen quickly.

"I have learned over the years that I can change a light bulb faster than a Formula One pit crew can change a tire," he laughed.

A woman in the apartments across from the Martins told them she quite enjoys the display.

"Every night after supper, she comes out on her balcony for a few minutes and just looks at our lights, just to feel better and enjoy them," said Scott. "That makes you feel really good. When people drive by and say 'the place looks great, it looks amazing' – thank you, we appreciate it."

A sign on the front lawn reminds spectators - "light lookers" - that if they like the display, the Martins would appreciate a donation to the local food bank, but they also get a lot of positive feedback about their spirit.

"We just want people to enjoy it, come in and have a look and hopefully it makes people feel better, especially this year," he said. "I have had a couple of comments like that, especially from neighbours, that it's a really nice thing, especially this year."

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Rotaract organizes community scavenger hunt for local youth

MIKE BAKER

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

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This business is a participant of the Rotaract Storefront Scavenger Hunt!

Siblings Harper (front) and Hunter (back) Hamilton were out in the downtown area last week, visiting local businesses and taking part in the Rotaract Christmas Scavenger Hunt. /Submitted Photo

Rotaract Haliburton Highlands has organized a special festive scavenger hunt for local youth over the Christmas period.

Launched back on Dec. 5, participants will have to scour the downtown area for hidden clues to complete the challenge. In total, 12 local businesses have signed up to play a part in the community scavenger hunt.

Speaking to *County Life*, Rotaract member Vivian Collings said the local club wanted to "do something a little special" this holiday season to help spread the Christmas cheer and put smiles on people's faces.

The group handed out activity sheets for the event at the Rotary Community Christmas Party 'Drive-Thru' edition, held at Curry Chevrolet in Haliburton on Dec. 5.

"[The sheets] explain what businesses participants will need to go to, and will also include Haliburton trivia and a colouring page," Collings said. "As a group we [went] around town and put up pictures of Christmas characters in the windows of the participating businesses. Kids will then have to write down what character they find in which business."

Participants that successfully complete all three stages will be entered into a draw with a chance to win a prize.

"We'll have prizes for different age groups," Vivian said. "Right now, we have some outdoor games and activities, we have a kite, and some craft kits. Then we'll also have some stuffed animals for younger children as well."

Rotaract is still a relatively new concept here in Haliburton. The local group was launched in January, and received their official charter from Rotary International in February. At present, the club boasts around 35 members.

Rotaract Haliburton Highlands has close ties with the Rotary Club of Haliburton. As Vivian explains, "Rotaract is basically Rotary, just for younger adults." The club is made up of individuals between the ages of 18 and 30, although allowances are made on a case-by-case basis for people who want to join, but are outside of that age bracket.

"We formed the group because we wanted to help out our community in any way that is needed," Collings said. "There's a big social component too – being able to build more connections with other people in our age group. We found there's a big gap between high-school age people in our community and Rotarians – there really wasn't any other group in town [servicing] people our age, so we started one."

There are currently 10,698 registered Rotaract clubs in 180 countries.

The local scavenger hunt is being offered at no cost to anyone wanting to participate. Activity kits are available for pick-up at Century 21, located at 191 Highland St. To be eligible for a prize, completed activity sheets should be dropped off at Century 21, or emailed to haliburtonrotaract@gmail.com.

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Santa, ol' Maybelle's first big crush, don'tcha know

Maybelle's

Fireside stories

IT'S TRUE. He may be a hundred and forty something years old, have a big bushy white beard and moustache that hides most of his face, wear baggy red pants and a jacket that barely covers his jelly belly, a vocabulary of three words: Ho! Ho! Ho!, and go flying around in a rickety old sleigh pulled by a team of aging reindeer, (their leader having a perpetually unexplained red glowing nose) … despite all that, when ol' Maybelle was knee-high to a cat and dreaming big dreams about what would show up under our sweet smelling Christmas tree… I also dreamed of Santa, my first big crush, don'tcha know.

So, I've been thinking. Now that I'm not a child anymore. Okay, I may be child-LIKE, but in dog's years, ol' Maybelle is ancient. And as a living relic, having seen much in my life and carrying it all with me like a wizened warrior … I think I'm ready to sit on Santa's lap and tell him what I'd really like for Christmas.

Now, I warn you, dear reader… what I am about to write may sound a bit sappy to you, but this time of year tends to bring out my sappiness with good intent, I can assure you. Here goes…

I'm picturing ol' Santa sitting in ol' Maybelle's cottage living room, on that big ol' hassock that my Aunty Hester bequeathed me (embroidered with acorns, thistles and those red berries that you can't eat), right in front of the fireplace, chomping down on shortbread cookies I baked for him. He's got crumbs in his beard that sprinkled right down to his belly. Surprisingly, he knows my name.

"Maybelle, de-LI-cious, my child."

"Your CHILD? I'm older than Methuselah!"

"Ho! Ho! Ho!" He pats his knees for me to take a seat.

"Really??" He keeps patting.

"Come here, Maybelle. Tell me what you want for Christmas and I won't ask if you've been naughty or nice. I think we both know the answer to that."

I mutter: "Harumphhh," and take a seat. His eyes are wonderfully twinkly and his "vibe" (as they used to say in the 60s) is sweet like honey. Suddenly, I regress to the little Maybelle I used to be… but with 'ol Maybelle's life experience.

"Santa, what I want I don't think you can give me, I'm afraid."

"Ho! Ho! Ho!… try me," he said.

Well, as you know, the world is experiencing a pandemic right now. People are hurting, many small businesses are barely hanging on… it's Christmas and Chanukah time and safety protocols limit our ability to be with our families and friends. If we're lucky, we can at least see them on Zoom or Skype or Facetime or whattsapp. I want to be upbeat and cheery to help offset this situation. So, Santa… I guess what I want for Christmas is… a feeling of joy despite all that's going on. Joy for everyone. For my good friends, Vilma Yuccch, Beanpole Starkman, Twindle Mumbly, Sybil Beaucannon Hughes, Officer Stanley Penelope McBottom… for everyone in Lake WhaddayathinkImean… and Haliburton, and Minden, and Bancroft… the whole county… the whole province… the whole country … the whole world. I want a huge WAVE of joy that picks us all up underfoot… whoosh!… and all of us riding it, keeping our balance… surfing together toward safe sunny shores. Yes, that's what I want for Christmas, Santa."

Santa looks at me, stares me straight in the eyes and says: "It's coming, my child. Hold it close. It's coming."

Maybelle's Fireside Stories is written by Jerelyn Craden. Jerelyn's books, "Vessie Flamingo Outshining the Moon," and "Maybelle's Cure for What Ails You" are available at amazon.com.

Top 10 reasons why Santa might not use the chimney this year

STEVE GALEA
Humour Columnist

SANTA, AS we all know, is known for dramatic fireplace entrances. But his media elf is starting to put out hints that this year things might be different. This year, Santa might not come down the chimney. Here are my top 10 guesses why:

1. A few too many pies last year.
2. Your new white carpet.
3. Not as young as he used to be.
4. Insurance rates covering chimney-based injuries through the roof.
5. He'd rather avoid chestnuts roasting on an open fire – if you know what I mean.
6. Carelessly placed pokers.
7. Time to confront his fear of doors.
8. Cost of dry cleaning has skyrocketed.
9. That family of raccoons.
10. Smoke allergy.

The viral carol

There's now a different season nigh
Wherein more folk coast on a sigh
Of courage, which is medicine
In isolation's tacit din
Where music keeps same words and bells
Bright kitchens breathe familiar smells
Of gingerbread and sugar dough
Of roasted veg, and stuffing so
Delicious, it surpasses bird
So family diners grab a third
Gigantic heaping plate of feast
Plus cranberries, potatoes greased
With butter from a local farm
Churned gently by some local arm
Pour local syrup on your yams
Smear much farm mustard over hams
And hum your gorgeous wistful tunes
Of baby born and winter moons
Of decking halls where wreath warms door
Festoon each surface more and more
With holly, ivy, pinecones, boughs
And garlands under which carouse
Our paper-hatted jolly pals
With rum in eggnog, hail chorales
Of Happy Season!! Happy Year...!!
Big barrows full of gifts appear

BUT...

Something's missing, something dear
Since this month we must face frontier
Of celebrating distanced joy
Within our carols, love employ
For all we do have, here or not
We'll manage season with forethought
And share our gratitude for life
As we wield lonely carving knife
And look beyond the window dark
To nod at stars where angels hark
And rhyme a silent prayer to
Beloved people getting through
This holiday without our hug
Who yet refuse to whinge 'humbug'
But bravely cloister safely home
Resisting classic urge to roam
And clink a hundred glasses loud
To dance and sing with bigger crowd
Yet...no, this can't be Christmas perk
Please do stay put, do paperwork
Send cards and poems, puzzles, news
All surefire ways to cure the blues
By phone or FaceTime, Zoom, TikTok
Creative ruse for sad nighthawk
To whisper Hey...I thought of you...
In 2020's sweet make-do

by Deborah Reed

Norm and Georgia Peschel have shared the Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer display they created to brighten the day of anyone in the area of the Canoe FM building in Haliburton. "We created Rudolph & gang simply because it was our favourite," said Georgia. "It will always be a classic, we try to add one character every year." /LAURA SMITH Staff

Festive display in Haliburton a true labour of love

SUE TIFFIN

Staff Reporter

While it's not uncommon to see deer on the front lawn of the building that houses Canoe FM, the Haliburton Highlands Land Trust and Haliburton County Volunteer Dental Outrea ch, people nearing the area are now spotting other familiar favourites that are making them take pause and smile: Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, Yukon Cornelius, Hermey the Elf, and Bumble, the Abominable Snowmonster of the North.

Georgia and Norm Peschel are sharing the display of characters from the beloved Christmas television special, 1964's Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, a favourite for both of them. The Peschels moved to Carnarvon from Keswick in July on their 28th anniversary, after visiting the area over the years and brought their creative spirit with them.

"I offered Canoe our display because no one but bears will see it here," said Georgia, who moved into the former house of artist Catherine Senitt, where she says "we've never been happier."

She and Norm try to add one character to the display each year.

"It has been enjoyed by busloads of children for over 10 years [from] when we first created it. This year with the pandemic, I thought it would be even more appreciated on an outdoor winters' walk. We created Rudolph and gang simply because it was our favourite. It will always be a classic."

Georgia says art is the one thing she has excelled in and is most passionate about.

"I spent much time alone as a child and started drawing the Saturday comics and watching Bugs Bunny," she said. "I thought I wanted to be an animator but soon changed my mind after one year of classical animation at Sheridan College."

Since then, she has taught art, murals, crafts and cartooning to "countless children," and her mural business was featured on CityLine and Craftscapes.

"I paint all day, every day from a wide variety of classic painting to funky outdoor art and bird houses [in partnership with Tom Burke] and for fun," said Georgia. Her editorial cartoons, comic strips and colouring pages have also been published in newspapers and magazines.

Though she said she's been "isolating long before it was cool or mandatory," Georgia also said she can't resist when she gets a good idea, which many times results in her reaching out to others to help them through struggles.

"We are here to serve," she said. "I serve by helping with my art. It's always a pleasure."

And despite the isolation of the year, she's staying active and making her mark on the community.

"I'm trying to become a better portrait artist, painting paddles from the Haliburton Forest, exploring my own woods – the possibilities are endless," she said. "I create every day – no excuses."

She said she's made friends around the world because of her drawings and comics.

"It is a wonderful feeling," she said. "We give what we can – I think generously is the only way to give. It doesn't always have to be done with money, this community is amazing with all the talent and

see CHRISTMAS page 9

This holiday season needs to be different.

The safest way to celebrate indoors is only with the people who live in your home. People who live alone can get together only with one other home.

Gatherings with friends and extended family can carry an increased risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. Consider celebrating outdoors or virtually with others that are not part of your household.

Know the gathering limits in your area before you choose to entertain with family and friends indoors. Indoor gatherings are not permitted in regions in Grey-Lockdown.

For all gatherings with anyone you do not live with:

- **maintain 2 metres physical distance**
- **wear a face covering**
- **avoid potlucks or shared utensils**
- **ensure everyone washes hands regularly, including before and after meals**

Self-isolate if you are sick, even if your symptoms are mild and ask guests to stay home if they feel unwell.

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Central Food Network continuing to feed local families over the holidays

MIKE BAKER
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Central Food Network is ramping up its annual Christmas food hamper program to offer a helping hand to struggling families in the Highlands East area this festive season.

Since launching in 2016, the organization has attempted to alleviate escalating hunger and heat-security issues in the region through the distribution of food, fuel and other supports to the people who need them. The venture is a four-way collaboration between the Highlands East Food Hub, the Cardiff Community Food Bank, the Highlands East Community Cooks and Heat Bank Haliburton County.

Hampers will include a turkey and all the fixings needed to prepare a traditional Christmas dinner, as well as some extra edible delights. Different toys and gifts for children will also be included, courtesy of the Haliburton County Home Builder's Association.

"We don't want to see anyone going hungry, or any kids going without," said Ken Mott, manager for the Highlands East Food Hub. "Although our doors aren't physically open the way they used to be, our hearts are and we want people to reach out if they need help."

Distribution of the hampers will take place this week, beginning on Monday, Dec. 14 and running until Friday, Dec. 18.

Last holiday season, Central Food Network handed out 115 Christmas hampers to families in the area. Staff are expecting the need to be even greater this year, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since March, the organization has seen an 11 percent increase in the number of visits to its member food banks.

The Highlands East Community Cooks have also been kept busy over the past nine months, distributing close to 7,000 frozen meal servings throughout the community since the pandemic began.

The only way the four groups have been able to keep up and meet the heightened demand is due to a substantial increase in the number, and amount of donations made by supporters.

"We have been overwhelmed with the number of donations that we have received," stated Cam McKenzie, manager of the Cardiff Community Food Bank. "People have really stepped up to the plate, both here and at our Wilberforce location, so we have been able to fully stock the shelves and fill the hampers."

The Highlands East Food Hub is open Wednesdays and Fridays, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. for people to pick up regular food hampers. Cardiff Community Food Bank is open from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month, and 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesday, and the third Thursday.

For more information, visit www.centralfoodnetwork.org.

> *"We don't want to see anyone going hungry, or any kids going without. Although our doors aren't physically open the way they used to be, our hearts are and we want people to reach out if they need help."*
>
> — Ken Mott, Highlands East Food Hub

Christmas display evokes 'squeals of delight'

from page 7

service it gives. I'm even more inspired living here due to all I've witnessed in just over a year – thank you."

In response to their own giving, Norm and Georgia have received lovely feedback through people who have taken notice of the fun, nostalgic Christmas display.

"The feedback has been lovely," said Georgia. "It brings us joy to hear how many are taking the kids/grandkids by to see it all lit up and moving. I have heard the squeals of delight for over a decade with that display, well worth the work that went into it."

Georgia gave a shout out to their friend Rodney, for helping them deliver and assemble the display.

"So nice to have neighbourly neighbours," she said.

The Peschels also celebrate Halloween – their spectacular haunted house display in Keswick has previously been acknowledged as the 'spookiest house in all of Ontario.'

"We still enjoy creating to create," said Georgia.

In 2021, the Peschels hope to replace the Christmas display with another creation.

"The past year has been quite the ride for us, for all of us," said Georgia. "I can't express in words how grateful I am to be here. The little I did get out and explore, and those I have met so far have all been lovely, kind, friendly, helpful and supportive. I truly feel blessed to be here and hope to be as inspiring as I have been inspired."

For more information about Georgia Peschel and her work, visit http://www.georgiatoons.com.

Community effort helps OPP fill the cruiser

OPP auxiliary officers Marc Jones, left at front, and Jesse Davis with OPP constables Dianna Dauphinee, left at back, Tyler Johnson and Michelle Scanlan stand with Foodland's owner and operator Brad Park, who came together for an effort to collect non-perishables for the 4Cs Food Bank with its annual Help Us Fill the Cruiser effort in Haliburton on Saturday, Dec. 5. OPP constables and members of the auxiliary accepted donations in Haliburton at the Foodland from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and at Todd's Independent Grocer from 1 to 3 p.m. on Saturday. There was also a Help Us Fill the Cruiser effort in Minden at the Foodland and the Valu-mart on the same day for the Minden Community Food Bank. /DARREN LUM Staff

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Haliburton Highlands Museum advent calendar

The Haliburton Highlands Museum is celebrating the festive season in a special way this year. Each day, from Dec. 1 to Dec. 25, Kate Butler, the museum's director, will be showcasing different items and artefacts via a Museum Advent Calendar. This week, we shine a light on the second set of entries of the feature, with more to come in the lead up to Christmas. The local museum will be showcasing each artefact on Twitter @HH_Museum.

Museum Advent Day 8: Eggnog is a drink that people seem to love or hate (sometimes with a sprinkling of nutmeg, pictured here), but did you know that it once caused a riot? In 1826, an eggnog-fuelled Christmas party at the United States Military Academy became so raucous that it resulted in the court-martialing of 20 cadets.

Museum Advent Day 9: On Dec. 9, 1965, A Charlie Brown Christmas aired on television for the first time. The holiday classic, which connected with the essence of the season, also contributed to aluminum Christmas trees falling out of fashion within a couple of years of its first broadcast.

Museum Advent Day 10: Looking for an answer to your holiday shopping dilemmas? Perhaps you might want to take a cue from royalty! In 1812, the Prince Regent, later George IV, chose to give mince pies to 124 people on his Christmas list (possibly carried in baskets like the pictured ornament), with the number of pies given indicating the importance of each person on the list.

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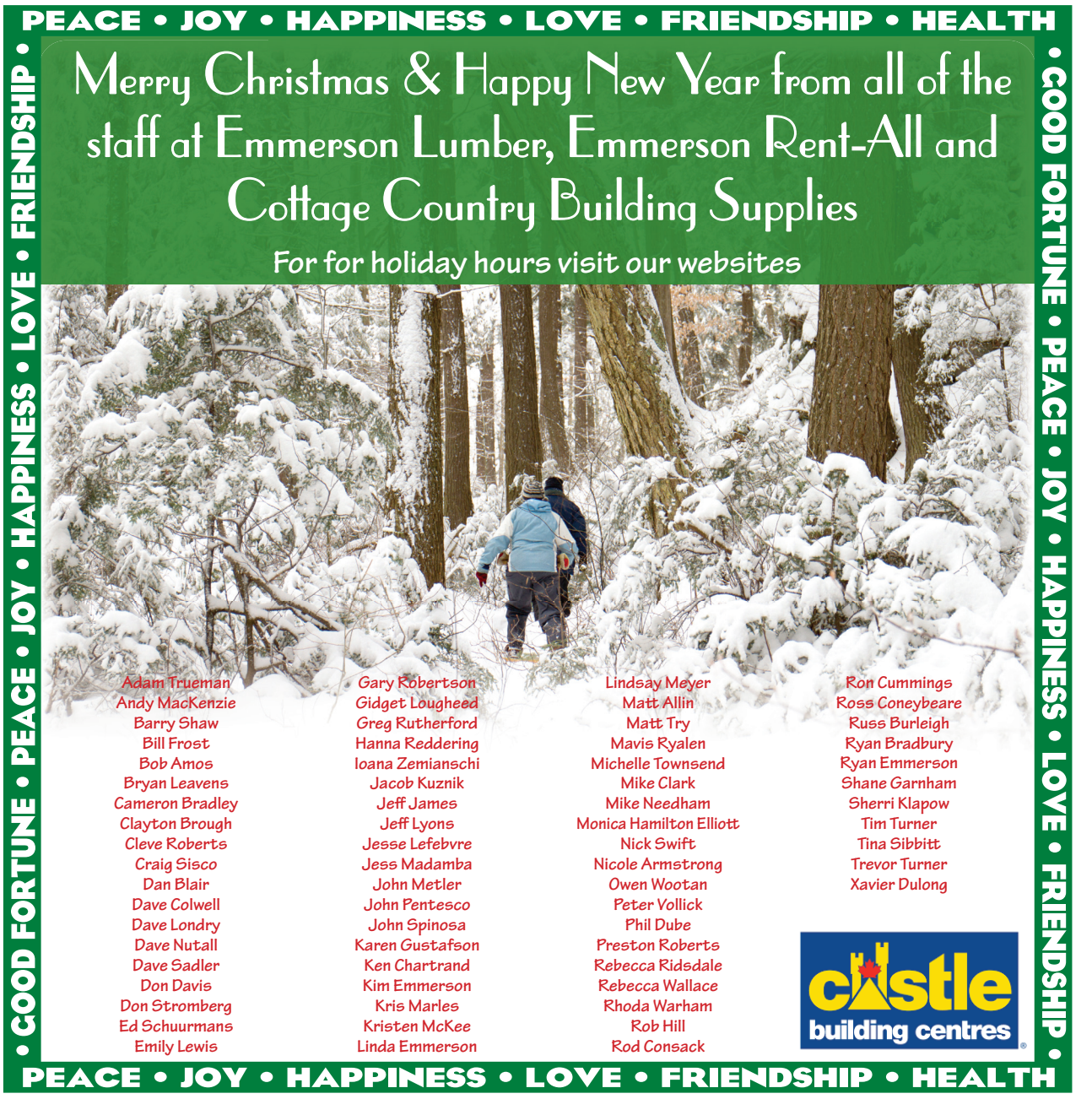
Along with the Staff
Andrea, Janine, Kristi,
Maureen, & Sandra
Our Best Holiday Wishes To You.
We cheerfully wish you a Merry Christmas with family & friends.
Thank you for your continued loyalty.
DAVID A.P. SHAPIERA B.A., LL.B.
Barrister & Solicitor

Museum Advent Day 11: The holiday tune "Silver Bells" first gained notoriety for being featured in the film The Lemon Drop Kid, which was released in 1951. It could have become noted for other reasons though – it was actually first called "Tinkle Bells" until someone close to the songwriters pointed out that might be misconstrued!

Museum Advent Day 12: When it was first invented, tinsel was a status symbol. First created in the 17 th century, it was actually made of strands of pure silver, which were intended to reflect the light of the real candles that were used to illuminate Christmas trees at that time.

Museum Advent Day 13: From "visions of sugarplums' to "Sugarplum Fairies", these treats are and iconic part of the holidays, but what are they? They actually didn't contain plums at all and were instead sugar comfits which contained a nut, seed or spice.

Museum Advent Day 14: Why do we hang stockings by the fireplace? According to legend, St. Nicholas secretly placed gold coins in the freshly laundered stockings of three young sisters who otherwise wouldn't have dowries, and therefore wouldn't be able to marry.



Minden Christmas bird count set for Dec. 19

ED POROPAT
Special to *County Life*

Although 2020 has been a challenging year for humans, with the greatest pandemic of the last century ravaging our planet, it has had little effect on our avian friends. In fact, Spruce Budworm outbreaks across parts of the Northeast have had the opposite effect, bolstering bird populations of several species.

How positive these outbreaks have been on population growth will be just one of the factors bird researchers might choose to examine using data collected from the yearly Christmas Bird Counts. Yes, that's correct. It's that time of year again. Time to get those bird feeders stocked and get your binoculars ready. The 54th annual Minden Christmas Bird Count is set to go on Saturday, Dec. 19.

Over a three week period stretching from Dec. 14 to Jan. 5, thousands of birders will once again fan out across the land, participating in hundreds of organized bird counts across two continents, from the Northwest Territories to Paraguay. Although bird populations are dynamic, the goal is to capture a "snapshot in time" of both distribution and abundance of bird species across the Americas. This static picture, combined with other data over the long term, allows researchers to gain an understanding of changing bird populations, including some alarming recent declines in some species.

The Bohemian Waxwing can be found in many places across our region. The bird survives by eating fruit and berries, and can often be found in large flocks while searching for food. /Submitted Photo

With the first local count back in 1967, Minden has been represented every year since. The first count yielded only 19 species, but also only had two participants. More recently, as many as 56 species have been recorded, but that includes dozens of field participants and feeder watchers. For the data to be valid, it must be standardized so each year the exact same 24 km diameter circle is used, encompassing communities such as Lochlin, Gelert, Kinmount, Moore Falls, and, of course, Minden. Field participants spread out across the circle and attempt to count every bird they see or hear in a 24-hour period. At the same time, feeder watchers record any birds visiting their backyard feeding stations. All the information is compiled and then sent to the National Audubon Society, where a yearly report of findings and trends are published.

This winter is looking like it might be a busy one. You may have noticed that many winter finches from the arctic and high boreal forest regions have already invaded Haliburton County. Evening Grosbeaks, in their beautiful yellow suits, are already visiting feeders in large flocks. They prefer black oil sunflower seeds. Pine Grosbeaks, with their gorgeous splashes of pink, are busily devouring any crab apples or berries they can find. Common Redpolls, irregular visitors from the arctic, are frequently being observed foraging in weedy fields and roadside ditches. The recent snows might encourage some of them to investigate local nyger feeders, along with siskins and goldfinches. Another large finch to look out for this winter is the Northern Cardinal. Despite the name, it is a southern bird that used to be quite rare on the Canadian Shield. The popularity of bird feeding, however, has allowed it to push north over the years, far beyond its historic range. This fall and early winter revealed quite a few roaming or resident birds in the county. They are always a treat to see!

A stunning winter visitor is the Bohemian Waxwing. It is a fruit and berry eater, and will often show up in large flocks to clean out a local patch of winterberry, serviceberry, mountain ash, or an ornamental crab apple tree. Listen

see page 13

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

FROM ALL OF US AT HALIBURTON TIMBER MART

Jodanne Aggett
Lyle Aubin
Brandon Bailey
Ian Bailey
Bryan Barry
Grenville Barry
Kathryn Batty
Cindy Bawdick
Dylan Blight
Jeremy Burk
Justin Burk
Kevin Burt
Hunter Chapple
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Ethan Coles
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Michael Davis
Brianna Elder
Brendon Fraser
Morgan Gadway
Jesse Gagnon
Ben Germuska
Wayne Graham
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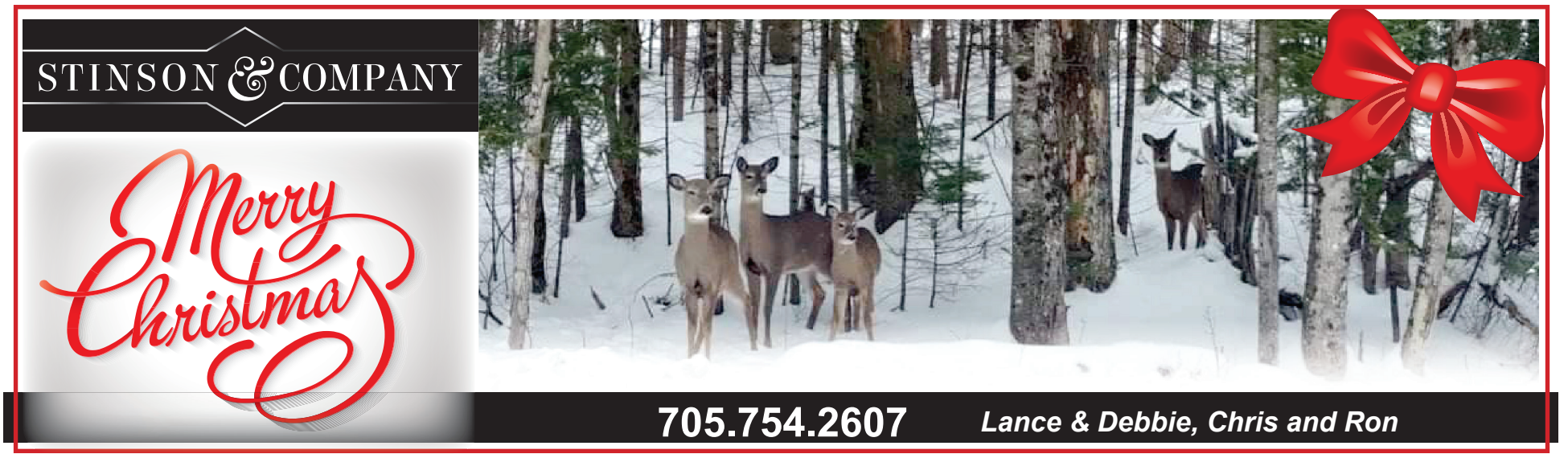
Karen & Brandon Nimigon



Dozens to take part in 2020 Minden Bird Count

from page 12

for their dry trills as they feed, or fly over you to their next feeding site.

Presently, many of our larger lakes, such as Gull and Horseshoe, are still ice-free. Because of the late, relatively warm fall, many waterbirds are still trickling in from the north, or lingering in the area. Gulls are still common, as are many species of ducks. An occasional loon or grebe can still be found on some lakes.

Rodents seem to be plentiful this winter due to the abundance of cones over the past few years. This glut of prey will also likely bring a corresponding increase in predatory species, such as owls and hawks. Some might even come into yards to see if they can surprise an unwary mouse or vole feeding on dropped seeds under a bird feeder.

One of the interesting aspects of conducting a bird count is the possibility of finding a vagrant or rarity. Last year's celebrity was a Varied Thrush near Miner's Bay, a bird associated with temperate rainforest mountain slopes of the west coast. It was followed closely by a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak, a bird expected to be in Central or South America by the time the count occurred. 2018 had a vagrant hummingbird of some sort! Will this year bring something special again?

Hanging baskets or balls of fat/suet at this time of year can draw in some of these rarer visitors. A few of the hardier warblers such as Pine or Yellow-rumped will take advantage of these feeding stations.The Canada Jay (formerly called Gray Jay) has all but disappeared from the southern Haliburton County landscape in the last few decades, likely due to climate change. They are especially drawn to suet feeders, and will be a species we will again be targeting during the count. On the contrary, Red-bellied Woodpeckers appear to be expanding their range northward and are now showing up around some local feeding stations.

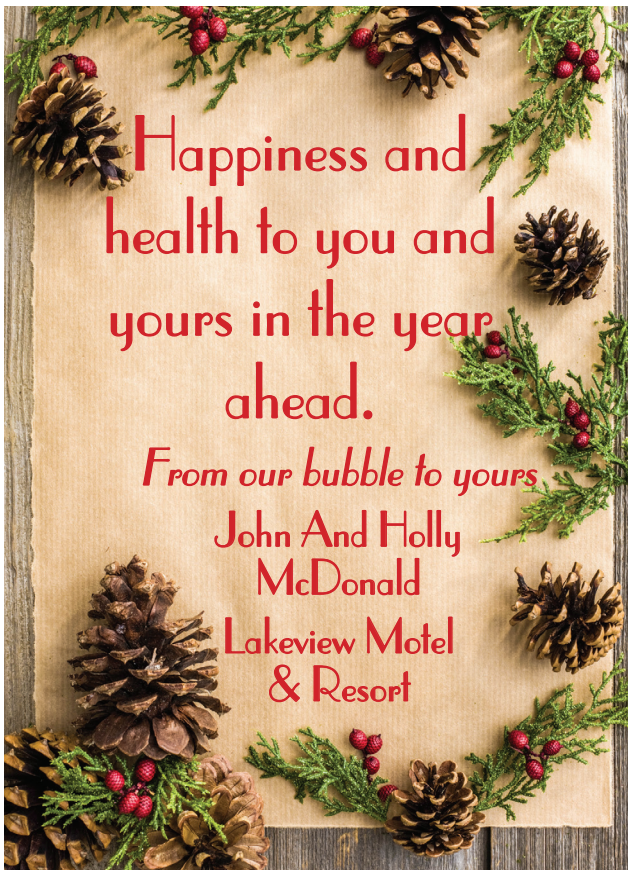
Keeping feeders well stocked in the coming few weeks will benefit both our resident birds and our field observers, as we approach the Minden Christmas Bird Count. If you would like to participate as a field counter or a feeder watcher, please contact Ed Poropat at 705-457-3018 or email at ed.barb@sympatico.ca

To report birds at your feeder on the day of the count, you can phone me at the above number on Dec. 20. Alternatively, you can e-mail your results to me or mail them to 71 Dean Court, Box 1204, Haliburton, ON, K0M 1S0.

Results must be received by Jan. 6 in order to be included in the report to American Birds. Species not seen by anyone on Dec. 19, but found on Dec. 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, or 22, will be recorded as Count Week birds.

We hope you'll join us on Dec. 19 to help make the 54th Minden Christmas Bird Count a continued success.

A Saw-whet Owl pictured out in the bush. /Submitted by Ed Poropat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Local schools make Advent wreaths virtually

MICHAEL RILEY
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

With the start of Advent on Nov. 29, the staff, students and their families at St. Martin of Tours Catholic School in Whitney and Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School in Bancroft, held Advent wreath making workshops over Microsoft Teams the week of Nov. 23 versus in-person group workshops due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Advent celebrates the coming of Jesus Christ in the four weeks leading up to Christmas. Tara McEnery, the vice principal at both schools, said the workshops went very well, and that nearly 20 Advent wreaths were made to celebrate the season.

McEnery says the Advent wreath workshops have been a tradition for several years at Our Lady of Mercy, though they just started doing them at St. Martin of Tours last year.

"It's a really nice gathering, usually the parents come into the school with their children in the evening and usually we have apple cider and cookies, and we get together and I bring all the materials into the gym and we just gather together and make them in a big space. But we couldn't do that this year," she says.

Meaning "coming" in Latin, Advent is the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. Christians use the four weeks (four Sundays) preceding Christmas (Christ's birthday) to prepare for this coming. Christians began using candle-lit wreathes to prepare for Christmas during the Middle Ages. However, the modern Advent wreath was initiated by a Lutheran minister who worked at a children's mission in Germany in 1839. This wreath gained in popularity among Protestants, and by the end of the 19th century, Catholics in Germany had adopted this custom too. Both Catholics and Protestants brought it over to North America in the 1920's and 1930's.

The Advent wreath is made from various evergreens, symbolizing eternal life. The circle of the wreath signifies the eternity of God, while the four candles represent the four weeks of Advent leading up to Christmas. Each week symbolizes one thousand years, because 4,000 years is the time from Adam and Eve to the birth of Jesus Christ. Three of the candles are purple; these symbolize the prayer, penance and preparatory sacrifices and good works undertaken during this time. Lit on the third Sunday, the fourth candle, the pink one, symbolizes the Sunday of rejoicing, as the faithful have arrived at the halfway point of Advent. The progressive lighting of the candles over the four-week period symbolizes the hope and expectation of Jesus' upcoming birthday.

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Usually the Our Lady of Mercy parish orders the Advent candle sets for the wreaths, according to McEnery, and the schools reimburse them. She says that this year they were also able to get candles from the craft store Michaels.

"This year, we sent home the oasis, the candles, and some embellishments like flowers and purple balls in a bag. We asked people to gather their own cedar to have handy and if they couldn't get cedar to let us know and we could get it for them. We ended up making nearly 20 wreaths; eight at St. Martin of Tours and 11 at Our Lady of Mercy," she says.

McEnery says that they made a wreath for the schools, but most of them stayed at home with the kids and their families.

"A lot of families will keep it on the dinner table and then on the Sundays there are prayers they can say when they light the candles. The idea is that they can be together and light the candle waiting for Christmas," she says.

McEnery says that St. Martin of Tours met over Microsoft Teams on Tuesday Nov. 24 while Our Lady of Mercy met over Teams on Wednesday Nov. 25 so that everyone could craft their wreaths together.

"We put together gift bags containing the necessary materials, a couple of blocks of oasis, a set of candles, a tin cake plate, accessories and prayer and information cards, which were sent home with students or through curbside pickup," she says.

Following the workshop, they asked anyone who was willing to share pictures of themselves or their kids with the school so they could put them up on Twitter, which they did.

McEnery says that the workshops were made possible by the Parent Involvement Grant, which usually funds projects that can bring parents and families into the school.

"It was really hard to do that this year though. We were able to do this virtually and people are still able to be together and participate in something we normally do every year anyway," she says. "So, we could do it that way, so it was nice."

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Haliburton Heat Bank increasing grant amounts as temperatures plummet

MIKE BAKER

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Now that Old Man Winter has pitched up for the season, Heat Bank Haliburton County is increasing the values of grants it is giving out to area residents to ensure they can keep their homes heated over the holidays and into the new year.

Coming into effect Dec. 1, the move will ensure families won't have to choose between keeping their house warm or putting food on the table.

"We are incredibly concerned about families in our community being able to meet basic needs, such as heat and hydro," said Tina Jackson, executive director for Central Food Network (CFN). As well as Heat Bank Haliburton County, CFN also boasts the Highlands East Food Hub, Cardiff Community Food Bank and the Highlands East Community Cooks under its non-profit umbrella.

"We hear stories all of the time from folks who are making heartbreaking decisions about whether to heat or eat, and in some cases even skipping medication as they just can't afford it once they've covered their food bill," Jackson continued.

Heat Bank Haliburton County offers grants, information, referrals and other practical supports to lower-income households across Haliburton County that are struggling to make their heat or hydro payments. As an authorized intake agency for both the Ontario Electricity Support Program and the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program, the local heat bank offers a comprehensive intake assessment to link people with the programs and services they need to get through a challenging time.

Like most charitable organizations, CFN is almost exclusively funded by community donations. Jackson says the heat bank is only able to up the value of its grants after receiving some "generous donations" in recent months. Earlier this year, the heat bank was selected as the winner at the fall meeting of 100 Women Who Care – a group of local advocates who regularly provide money to a wide range of charities and causes. That win netted the organization $6,400.

In November, Carnavon's Rhubarb Restaurant held its annual Christmas fundraiser, with most of the funds going directly to the heat bank. Launched back in 2014, the event has raised over $75,000 to date.

"The heat bank not only provides heat to those who need it most, but also social support and assistance with helping to end the cycle and feel empowered," said Terri Matthews-Carl, owner of Rhubarb Restaurant. "We are so grateful to help play a role in this very worthwhile project."

Each year, the heat bank assists approximately 120 homes with supports such as firewood donations, grants for furnace fuel, free energy conservation products and help in identifying and applying for other programs and credit to reduce utility expenses. The program is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. To inquire about services, call 705-306-0565, or email heatbank@centralfoodnetwork.org.

For more information on the Central Food Network, visit www.centralfoodnetwork.org.

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DEC. 26....9 AM - 5 PM
DEC. 27-30....7 AM-9PM
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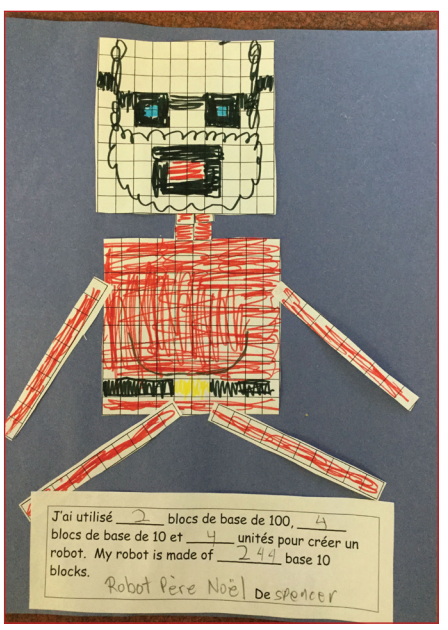
66 Museum Road, on the outskirts of Haliburton Village
For more information, please call 705-457-2760
or visit www.haliburtonhighlandsmuseum.com

Holiday artwork by

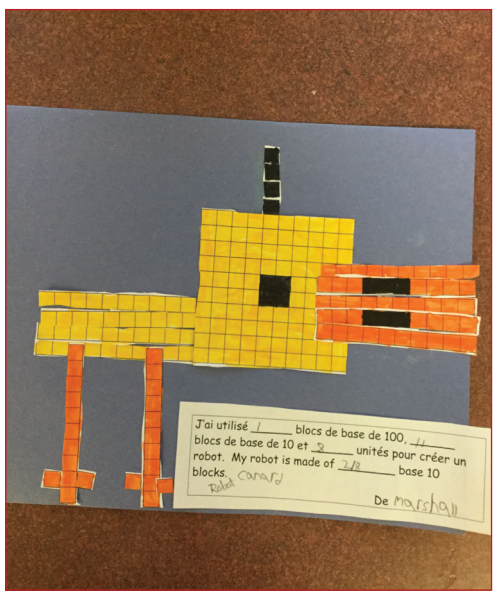
A patterned Christmas tree. By Jakob Lebel, Grade 1

A Red Candle, in celebration of the first of seven candles lit to recognize the seven principles of Kwanzaa. Umoja, the word included on the candle, means unity and togetherness. By Jaime Holwell, Grade 1

Rangoli, an Indian pattern that features materials such as coloured rice, coloured sand, or flower petals, in celebration of Diwali. By Kayden Hard, Grade 1


J'ai utilisé 2 blocs de base de 100, 4
blocs de base de 10 et 4 unités pour créer un
robot. My robot is made of 244 base 10
blocks.
Robot Père Noël De spencer

Robot Santa Claus. By Spencer, Grade 3


J'ai utilisé 1 blocs de base de 100, 4
blocs de base de 10 et 2 unités pour créer un
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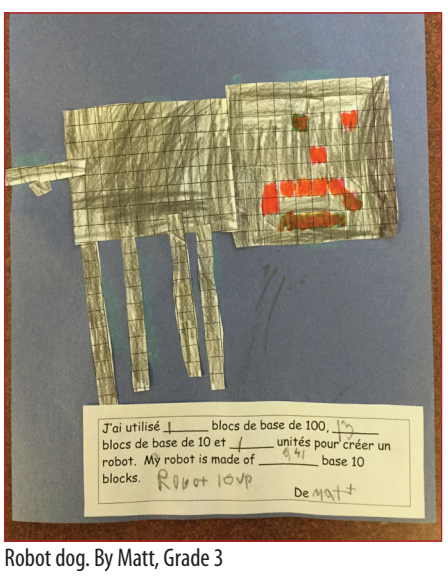
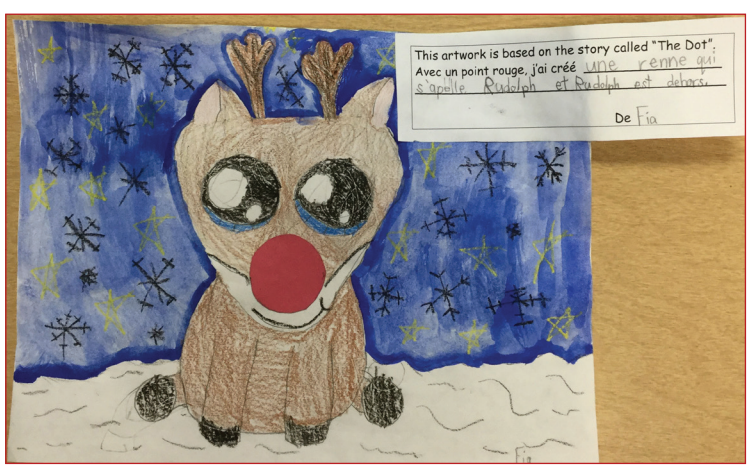
blocks. canard
De Marshall

A robot canary. By Marshall, Grade 3


J'ai utilisé 1 blocs de base de 100, 13
blocs de base de 10 et 1 unités pour créer un
robot. My robot is made of 141 base 10
blocks. Robot chien
De Matt

Robot dog. By Matt, Grade 3


This artwork is based on the story called "The Dot".
Avec un point rouge, j'ai créé une renne qui
s'appelle Rudolph et Rudolph est debout.
De Fia

Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer. By Fia, Grade 3

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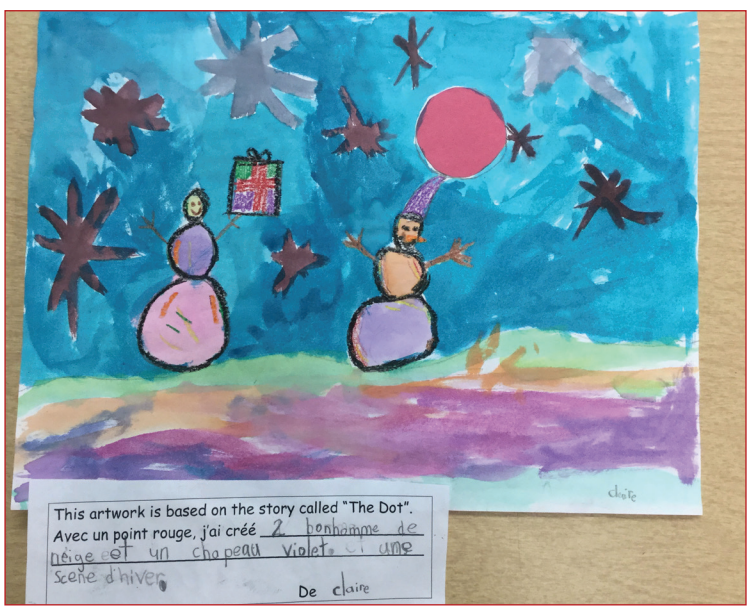
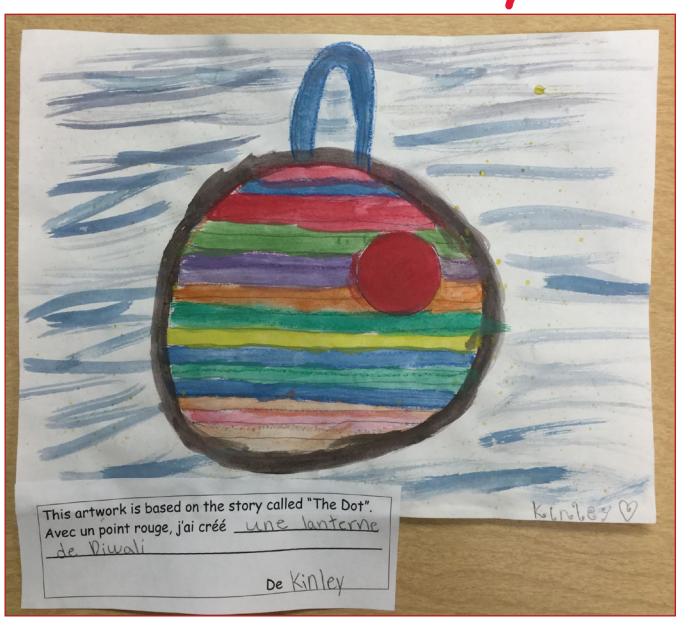
Contest open to all legal residents of Ontario. Adult prize winner(s) must be 19 years of age or older. Grand prize winner receives a Total of $1,500 (One thousand five hundred dollars) in gift certificate(s) from any participating Haliburton B.I.A member. The gift certificate(s) can be spent at one participating Haliburton BIA member location, or multiple locations with not less than 100 dollars spent per location. The Grand prize gift certificate(s) total not to exceed $1,500. Ballots must be received by authorized Haliburton BIA merchant. *Prize must be accepted as awarded and may not be substituted or converted to cash.*

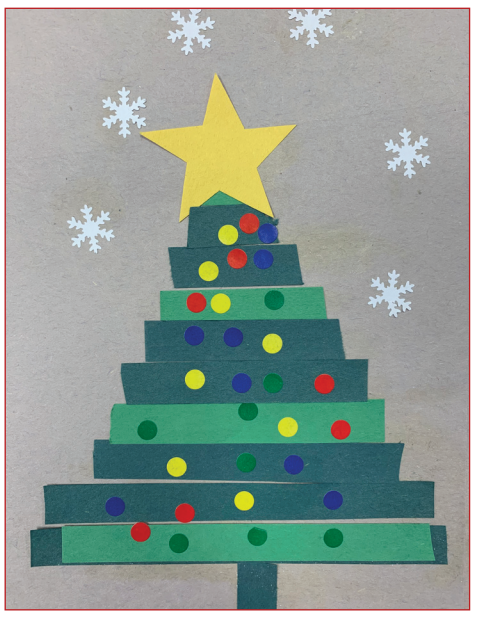
students at Stuart Baker Elementary School


This artwork is based on the story called "The Dot".
Avec un point rouge, j'ai créé 2 bonhomme de neige ont un chapeau violet. et une scene d'hiver
De claire

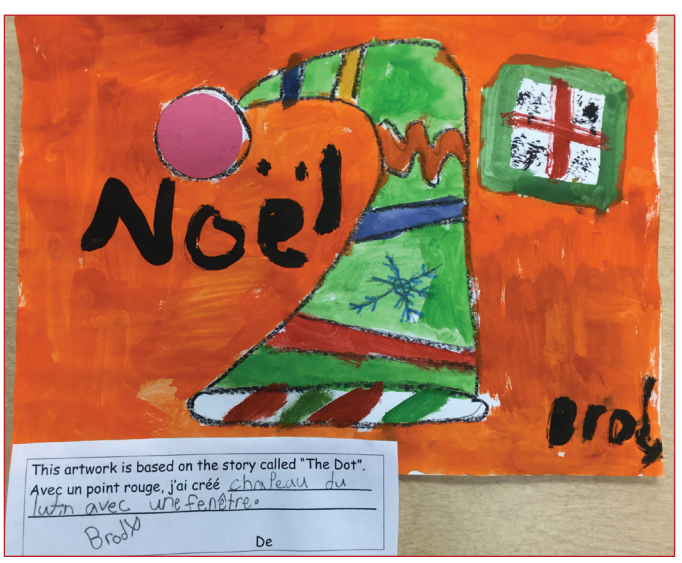
A winter scene featuring two snowmen. By Claire, Grade 3



A Diwali lantern. By Kinley, Grade 3

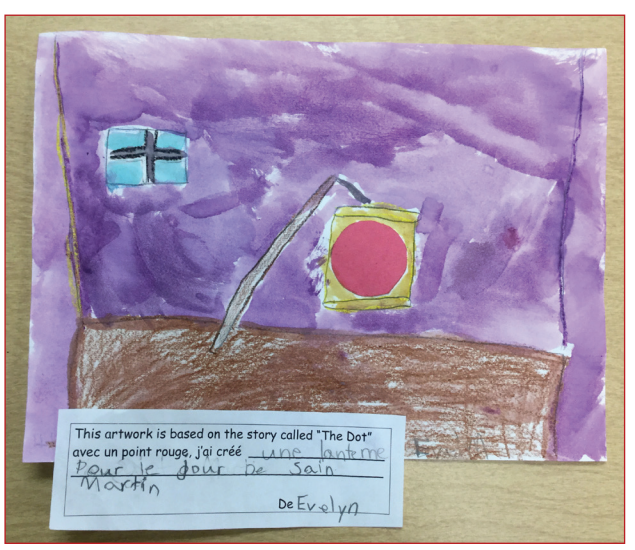


A patterned Christmas tree. By Charlie Mainprize, Grade 1

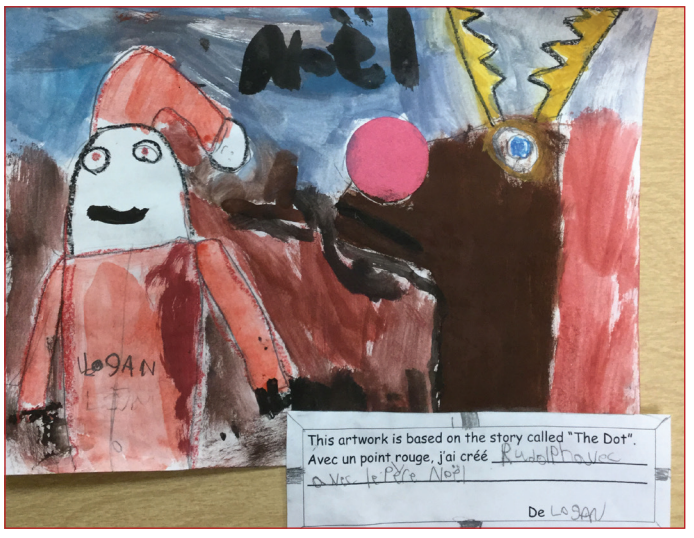

Noël
This artwork is based on the story called "The Dot".
Avec un point rouge, j'ai créé chapeau du lutin avec une fenêtre.
Brody
De

A festive leprechaun hat beside a window. By Brody, Grade 3

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer outside in the snow. By Sena, Grade 3


This artwork is based on the story called "The Dot"
avec un point rouge, j'ai créé une lanterne pour le jour de Saint Martin
De Evelyn

A lantern for St. Martin's Day. By Evelyn, Grade 3



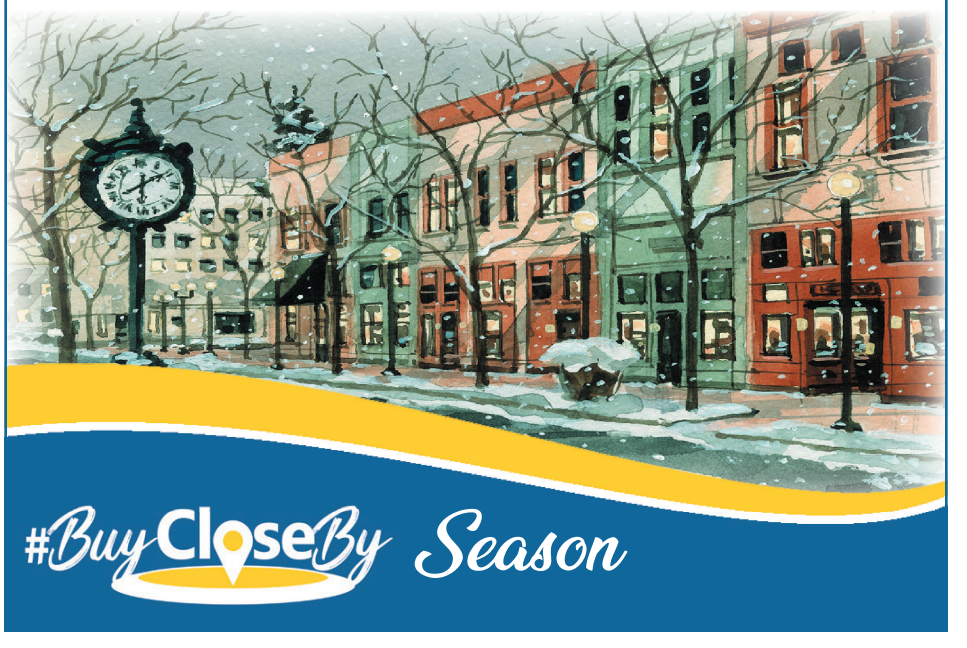
Santa Claus and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. By Logan, Grade 3

When we **#BuyCloseBy**, we support our economy and county, but also our friends and neighbours.

Spending at independent retailers generates 50 times more local economic benefit than spending online.

Haliburton Highlands CHAMBER of COMMERCE

#MyChamber



J.D. Hodgson Elementary School

The following statements were provided by students who shared their thoughts and feelings on what Christmas means to them.

By Rilynn Bain-McFadden

Holiday Traditions

I think that my traditions in Haliburton are different from other cultures around the world like the African-American celebration of Kwanzaa and the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah and our family celebrates Christmas. I think it's cool that different cultures do different traditions and special events.

How would I describe or explain Christmas

I would first start off by saying that you don't need all these things to celebrate Christmas, all you need is your family and friends. So Christmas is normally celebrated by having a Christmas tree in your house wherever you want it. The tree can be real or fake. It can be a big tree or a small tree and you decorate the tree with lights, tinsel, ornaments which are different glass shapes with hooks to hang, ribbon and a star or an angel on the top. Next, if you have a fireplace, people hang their stockings on with tape or a nail. Stockings are big socks that can hold different things in them. Also, you don't need a fireplace for your stocking, you can also just leave them on your couch or table. There is this man named Santa who comes and leaves you a present under your tree for you in the morning for you to open. Different families do different things on Christmas so your morning can go how you want it to because it's your house. Once again you do not need to have or do all these things to have Christmas all you need is your family and your loved ones.

Ways to help donate

Christmas also is not all about receiving. It's also about the giving. It is nice to donate around the holidays because it's hard for people to buy food, water, clothing for the winter, etc. So by helping we all can donate to food banks, homeless shelters, etc. Even just writing a note and leaving it in a car window can make someone's day. So these are some ways to help around the holidays. And if you don't have enough money, you don't need to donate, just try your best.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

By A.J Butera

Our December holiday is Christmas, a holiday based around "Santa," the legendary figure that gives gifts around the world to those who celebrate Christmas.

We decorate the house with Christmas decorations such as a pine tree fitted with ornaments, a wreath which can be made out of a wide variety of colorful things. My Christmas, or December holiday, starts out with waking up and meeting up around the pine tree. During Christmas, gifts of all shapes and sizes are exchanged and opened, but before opened, they are put under the pine, or "Christmas" tree. When our entire family is gathered by the tree, we take turns opening gifts exchanged and given in our family.

Christmas, or our December holiday, is essentially exchanging gifts and spending time with family.

December Highlights

By Colton Foley

What December means to me in Haliburton is snow, Christmas, skiing, snowboarding and ice fishing.

Holiday Traditions

By Lara Gallant

Both Hanukkah and Christmas have gift giving and are to bring families together. They also both happen in December. Some differences between

Season's Greetings
You, our loyal customers,
are the secret to our success.
Thank you for doing business
with us again this year.
We wish you a safe and
Happy Holiday Season
and a prosperous 2021.
G. Rowden Construction

J.D. Hodgson Elementary School

the two holidays are Jewish people get a little present everyday. But for Christmas, you get one piece of chocolate out of an advent calendar.

I would say that this "Holiday" tradition is called Christmas for me and it is celebrated on the 25th of December because that's the day Jesus was born. Some traditions that we do are putting up a pine tree in our houses and decorating it. Another tradition we have is putting up stockings that a person called Santa will fill with candy and toys. Santa is a mystical person who lives in the North Pole making toys all year for kids all around the world. Many little kids love Santa and believe in him.

My December
By Brechin Johnston

In my house in December we are doing a lot of stuff like sports, work, school,etc….

I myself am doing lots of sports, and school -- mostly hockey but sometimes I am playing baseball indoors. School is kind of hard this year because we have to wear masks all day. And it is different from last year because we didn't wear masks. But at least we are at school learning new stuff and seeing our friends again. December 25 is a special day for my family. It is CHRISTMAS! And I get to spend a day with all my family and get presents and have fun.

December Holidays like Christmas and Boxing Day are traditions for my family. On Christmas we go to all of my Nana and Papa's houses and spend a day having fun and giving presents and getting presents and talking to my cousins. I haven't seen them in a long time since COVID-19 started. Boxing Day for me and my family is to watch the World Juniors with my cousins and cheer for Team Canada and have a big turkey dinner.

December Holiday Traditions
Owen Sisson

December means a lot to me. In December I like to celebrate Christmas with my family, play hockey, go hunting with my dad, go ice fishing (maybe), go sledding down my driveway with my sister, go snowmobiling around my house, and spend time with my family. It means a lot to me to be able to do this stuff because I do them every year and they are pretty much traditional events that I do. My favourite tradition is Christmas because I get gifts from Santa, my family like my parents and my grandparents, and even my cousins, aunts and uncles. I think my traditional events would be different in other parts of the world because they might not do these things because they might not even know what these things are. But there are some countries that do celebrate Christmas like we do.

December
Beckham Reynolds

What December means to me is the time to have fun. One of the things that I like to do in December is snowmobile. When I go snowmobiling it gets me outside and I feel free on it. Another thing that I do with snowmobiling is go to my friend's house. Another thing that I like to do in December is ski/snowboarding. When I do these things I go with my friends and they always make it fun to do.

In December, I also like to put stuff out for the deer like food. Some of the food that I put out is left over corn and carrots from the store. Other highlights are playing games like snowball fights and hockey in the winter. I have a rink in my backyard. December is my favorite season and when it comes it is so fun especially when there is enough snow.

December and What it Means to Me?
By Chase Winder

Good question, there are lots of things special about December and including Christmas and most importantly Jesus' Birthday. So to a lot of Christians December's Christmas is the most important and best day of the year. But I'm a Christian and my favourite is Halloween because it's in October, and I'm born in October so that's why it's my favourite holiday.

In different countries lots of things are different because of different cultures. So yes, there are a lot of differences but there are some similarities like a lot of countries celebrate Christmas and a lot celebrate Halloween so there are some similarities.

So for Christmas we set up a Christmas tree and we put lots of cool things on it. For instance my family always puts pictures of special moments like a picture of my Mom & Dad, and then there were pictures of me and my siblings as babies. We put a lot of cool stuff on the tree. Then we make a Christmas list for what we want to get as presents so our parents can buy them for us. Then we wait but then some kids get advent calendars and each day of December we get a piece of chocolate. That's basically all of what we do in December.

What does my December look like?
Toby Posti

In December what most people I know look forward to is Christmas which is where you open presents, eat turkey or ham and celebrate Jesus's birthday which was on Dec. 25. In December we have advent calendars which have 24 chocolates or candy usually something sweet to lead up to Christmas day. When you wake up you will find presents under the Christmas tree that is decorated with shiny balls, other things that are important to you and a star or an angel on top.

My December is very snowy and you can go sledding, snowboarding, skiing and snow skating. In the winter I also play hockey – competitive and just for fun – on the rink that we make every year. We decorate not that much though we will put up a couple of lights but obviously a Christmas tree. We are very lucky to have food and get presents because some people can not afford anything though they still want to get you something.

CEDAR WINDS
DESIGN ≈ BUILD
www.TheBetterWayToBuild.com
Extending a heartfelt thank you to our valued
clients, business partners, their families
and all of our community.
Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!
From the Cedar Winds Design ~ Build Team

An important message from SIRCH Community Services:

With winter's arrival and the pandemic creating additional financial hardship and isolation, SIRCH is very concerned for the most vulnerable and at-risk people living here.

Before COVID, we were producing 250 - 300 prepared & frozen meals a month and distributing them throughout the county to people who needed them the most.

And then, COVID hit and the demand for prepared meals skyrocketed...

> *"I am a single mom and was laid off due to COVID. I can't stand long enough to prepare decent meals for my 6 and 4 year old daughters because I am recovering from surgery. Money is very tight and it's hard to add vegetables to each meal. SIRCH 's meals have been a godsend to me and my girls."*

With help from the community, SIRCH has made and given out over 23,000 meals, soups and fruit, FREE, since March.
It's essential that we continue to produce a greater number of healthy meals to meet the urgent need in Haliburton County.

You can help make it happen.
Please give to SIRCH's Gifts from the Heart campaign today.
Thank you.

SIRCH community services

Donate online: www.sirch.on.ca/donate
e-transfer: donate@sirch.on.ca
or phone SIRCH: 705-457-1742

Gifts *from the* Heart

Donate online:
www.sirch.on.ca/donate
e-transfer: donate@sirch.on.ca
or phone us: 705-457-1742.

"A long-time friend of mine suffers from the early stages of dementia but still lives on her own. She can't follow recipes very well these days, and I can't help her cook anymore because of COVID risks. She started getting frozen meals from SIRCH in April. Now I don't have to worry about her not eating properly. She just heats the meals and enjoys. Sometimes she also gets apple crisp and loves that. Amazing."

"My neighbour Jim rarely leaves the house anymore due to depression, and all he has to cook on is one hotplate. When I found out about SIRCH's meals, I started to bring him a couple a week. Now he looks forward to them-especially the roast beef. He asked me to thank you for him"

Please mail this form to SIRCH Community Services, P.O. Box 687, 49 Maple Avenue, Unit 4, Haliburton ON K0M 1S0.

☐ $25 ☐ $50 ☐ $100 ☐ Other $_____

☐ I wish to make a monthly donation on my credit card. Amount $_____

☐ Cheque enclosed (payable to SIRCH Community Services)

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

Card Number: _____ Card Expiry Date: _____

Name on Credit Card: _____ Card CCV: _____

Name: _____Phone: _____

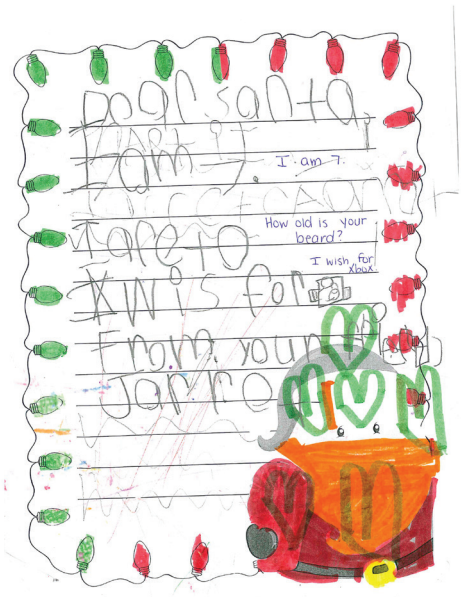
Address: _____ Email: _____

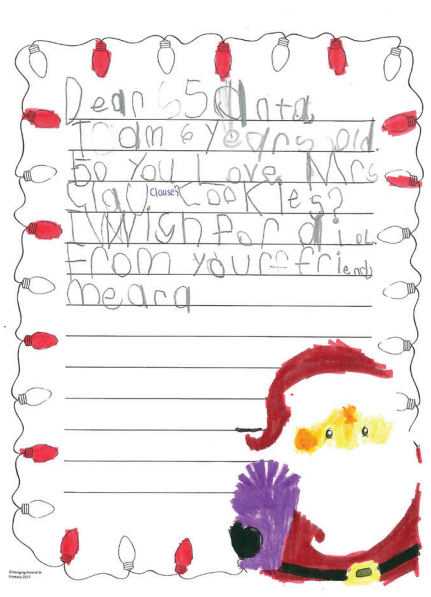
Registered charity #130588767 RR0001

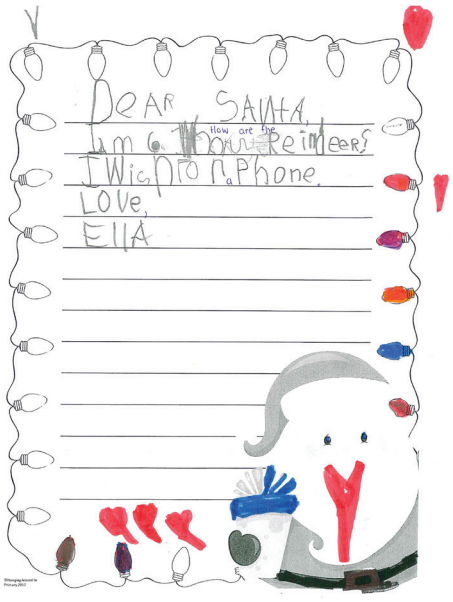
SIRCH community services

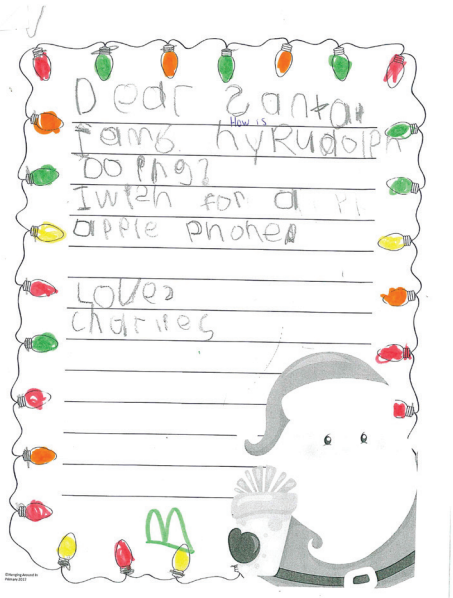
Gifts from the Heart

Cardiff Elementary School Letters to Santa









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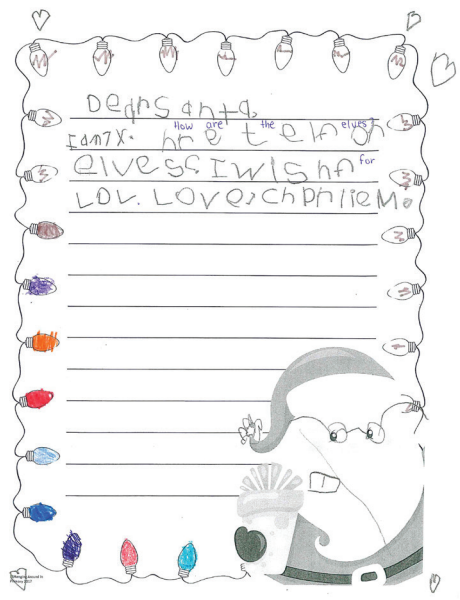
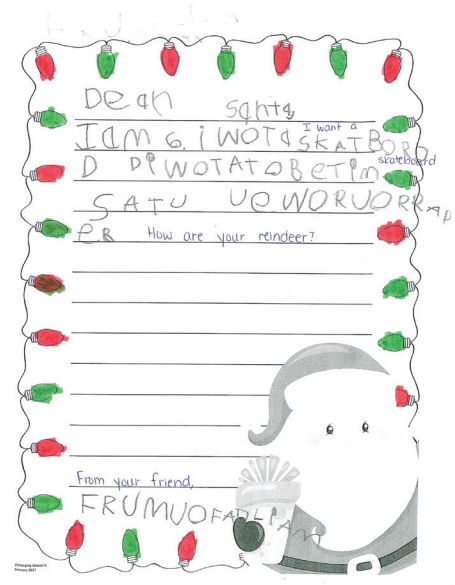
WINTER HOURS
Effective Nov. 1, 2019
to May 1, 2020
7:30 - 5:00
CLOSED SATURDAYS
*Closed December 25,26 & January 1





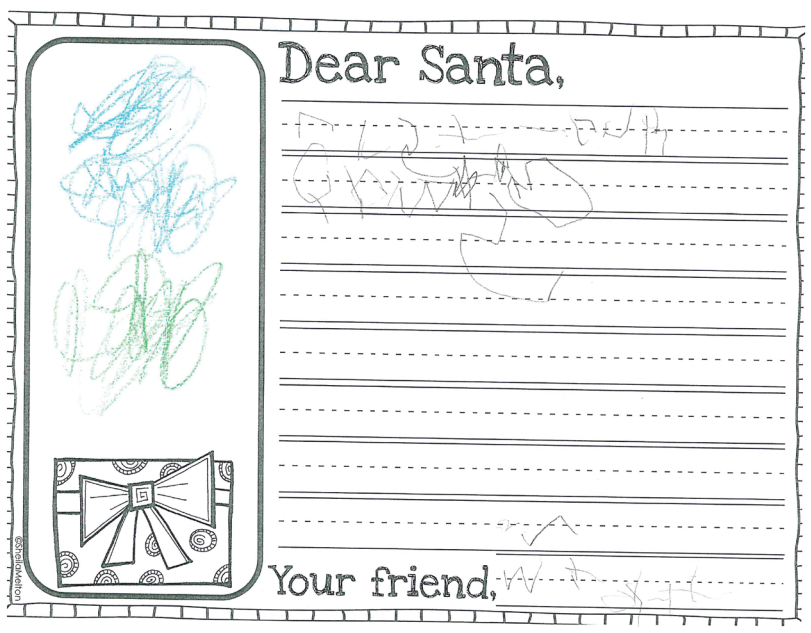
TASN The Appliance Service Network

Especially after the year that has been, we need to remember that Christmas is about peace, hope, love, joy and faith. It is our sincere wish that you experience these this holiday season and thank you for supporting our business this year.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Rick Gibson
Certified Technician

705.489.1114
rick@tasn.ca
www.tasn.ca



705 455 2995

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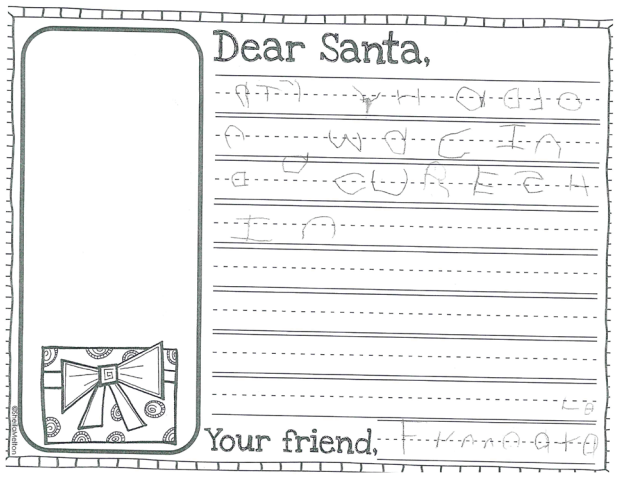
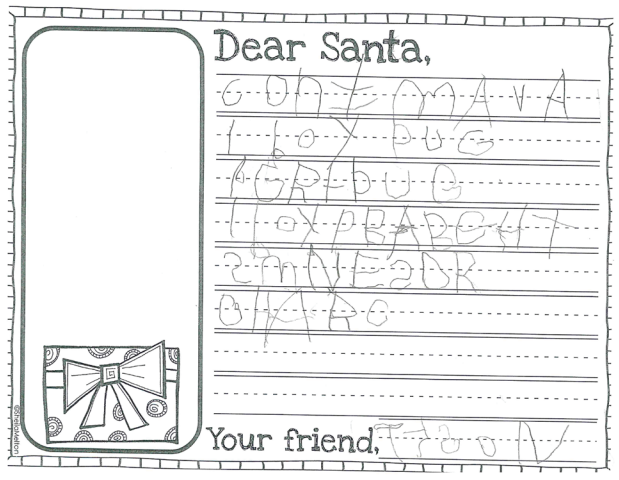
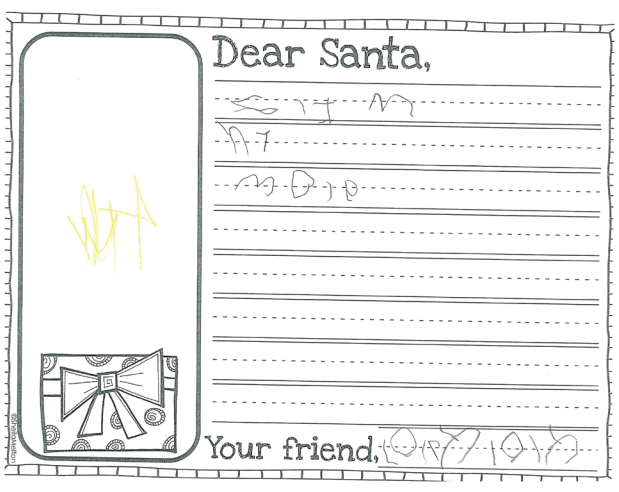
Cardiff Elementary School Letters to Santa







Happy Holidays
From Our
Home to Yours
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ENTERPRISES LTD.
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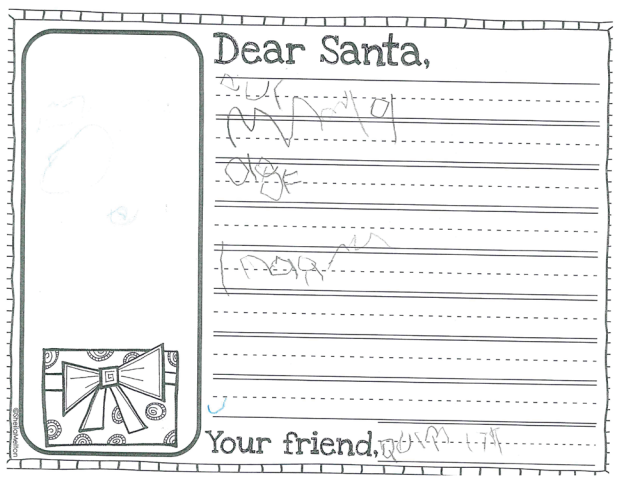
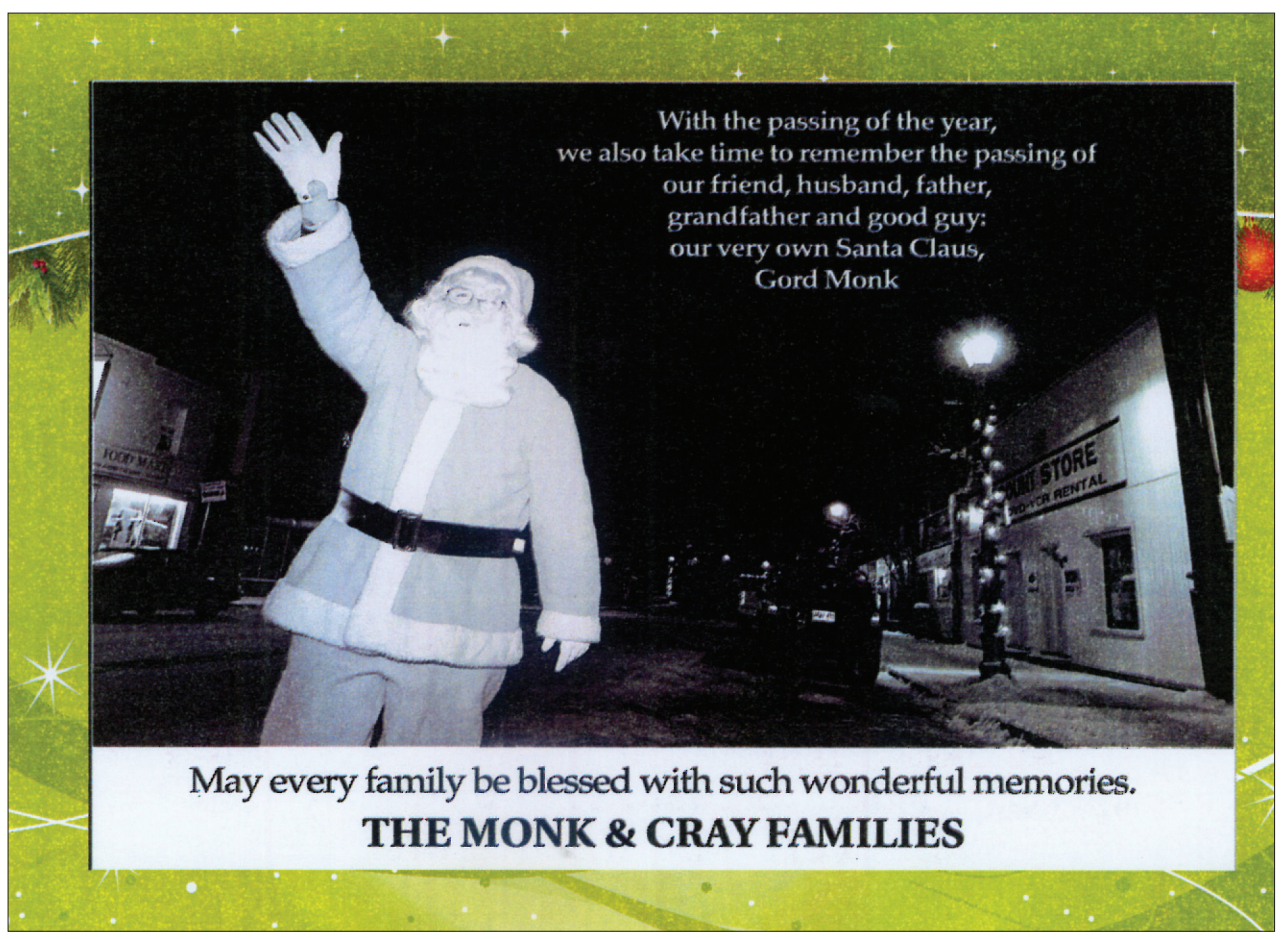
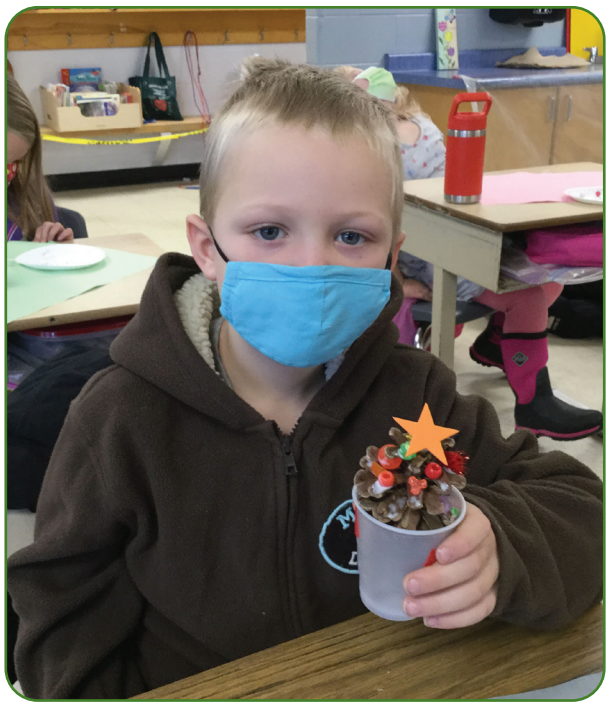



With the passing of the year,
we also take time to remember the passing of
our friend, husband, father,
grandfather and good guy:
our very own Santa Claus,
Gord Monk
May every family be blessed with such wonderful memories.
THE MONK & CRAY FAMILIES

Archie Stouffer Elementary School

Students from Mrs. Tokar and Ms. Card's Kindergarten class at Archie Stouffer Elementary School in Minden have had a busy week preparing for the festive season. The kids participated in several different Christmas-themed activities, including writing letters to Santa Claus, decorating Christmas tree pine cones, and painting different shaped salt dough ornaments. /Photos Submitted.



May the holiday season end the present year on a cheerful note and make way for a fresh and bright New Year. Here's to a great 2021!
Lisa Mercer Broker
Cell 705-457-0364
www.lisamercer.ca
RE/MAX PROFESSIONALS NORTH

Have a Safe, Healthy and Happy Holiday Season
Country Rose
FLOWERS & GARDEN
13513 Hwy 118 W. Haliburton
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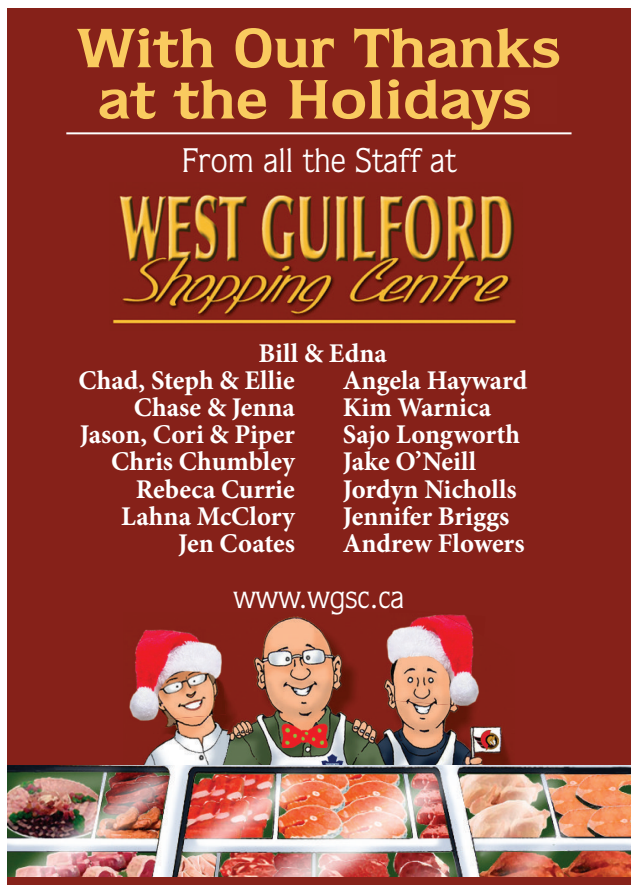
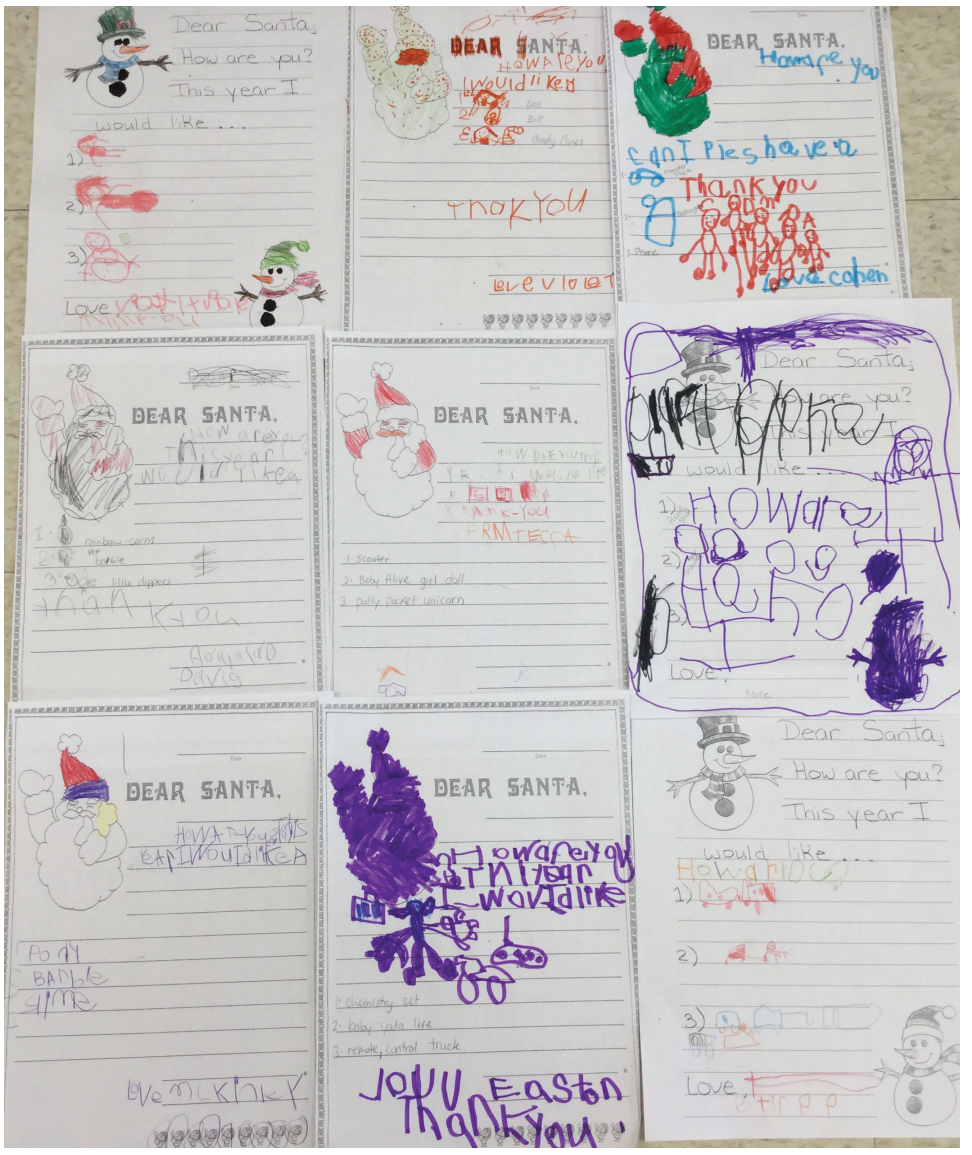


Archie Stouffer Elementary School



It's confirmed - Santa is coming to Haliburton County

MIKE BAKER
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Boy, do we have a scoop for you.

County Life can exclusively report that Kris Kringle, ol' Father Christmas himself will be making a pit stop in Haliburton County on Dec. 25. That's right kids, Santa Claus is indeed coming to town!

The exciting news comes directly from the lips of county warden Liz Danielsen, who has spent the past several months corresponding with officials from the North Pole. While it's been a long wait, Danielsen received confirmation this week that the big guy has even bigger plans for kids across the county.

"This is such an exciting time," Liz beamed. "I've been dealing with the head elf up north, and he's so very busy getting ready for Christmas. I waited a couple of days, and it was actually Mrs. Claus herself who reached out to me, to tell me that Santa has been watching and believes the children of Haliburton County have been incredibly good this year. So good in fact, that he plans to make the Haliburton area one of his very first stops."

The children of Haliburton County were ranked number one as the best behaved across all of Canada, and finished second amongst all communities worldwide – behind only the baby elves of the North Pole!

Now remember, Christmas is a very busy time for Santa and his reindeer. Santa has millions of homes to visit, and his reindeer – Dasher, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen and, of course, Rudolph – have lots of flying around to do. So, let's make sure they have enough food in their bellies so that they don't get hungry at any point during the night.

We caught up with one of the elves from the North Pole who helps to look after Santa's reindeer. While the gang will eat absolutely anything, Santa included, the elf told us a little about their favourite treats.

"Reindeer love their vegetables. Their favourite thing to eat is a carrot. Carrots help to keep them strong, and also make sure they can see in the dark!" the elf, who we believe may have been called Bernard, said. "Then for Santa, he likes his treats. If you leave him a cookie and a glass of milk, he'll be super excited! He may even leave you an extra present under your tree."

The most important thing to remember, though, is to go to bed early on Christmas Eve. As we all know, Santa knows when you've been sleeping and he knows when you're awake. Santa can only visit homes where all the children are asleep, so if you're looking forward to seeing what Santa left for you on Christmas morning, and opening all of your presents, make sure you go straight to sleep once you're in bed.

Christmas has always been Liz's favourite time of the year. When she was a little girl, she would dream about visiting the North Pole, meeting Santa and feeding Rudolph a carrot. She still remembers the day when a little piece of that dream came true, right here in Haliburton County.

"I was at a tree lighting ceremony in Algonquin Highlands last year and of course Santa was there, waving to all the children, and the moms and dads. But I didn't see Rudolph. All my life, all I had ever wanted was to see that very shiny nose of his," Liz said. "Then, on Christmas Eve, it happened. I was getting ready to go to bed, everyone else in the house was asleep, and I heard tapping on the roof. I went outside to see what was going on, and there was Rudolph! He looked right over at me and smiled, with a carrot dangling out of his mouth. His nose was so red and shiny. I smiled back, said hi, and went back inside. I heard some more tapping, and then he was gone."

She concluded, "That was such a special moment."

There are now less than ten sleeps to go until Christmas is here, so remember kids – behave yourself, listen to your mom and dad, and Santa will make sure Haliburton County is one of the first places he visits when he delivers his presents.

Merry Christmas!
MPP Laurie Scott
Haliburton - Kawartha Lakes - Brock
14 Lindsay Street North, Lindsay ON
T · 705-324-6654 ✦ F · 705-324-6938
laurie.scottco@pc.ola.org

Drawn by Georgia Peschel

Some winter driving tips from a pro

DARREN LUM
County Life Staff

Experienced driving instructor, Ian Law of ILR Car Control School, may not be able to share his wealth of knowledge from his experience racing and instructing like he has the past two decades, after Minden Hills didn't grant approval to use the Minden Fairgrounds this winter, but he has important advice for motorists this winter: slow down and drive according to conditions.

Operating a driving school since 1989 and with dozens of years of racing experience, Law knows all about pushing a car to its limits and finding out what happens when its pushed past them.

Over the past two decades while making the drive up to Minden from Brampton, he's seen everything. The number one issue, he says, is everybody is driving too fast for the conditions.

"I tell you now, I'm the slowest guy on the road" he said.

He understands why drivers will exceed the speed limit by up to 20 km/h during the spring and summer, particularly on the 400 series highways, which were designed for 130 km/h speeds with wide shoulders and expansive sight lines.

"But once you get on roads that aren't designed for that then the speed limit really needs to apply," he said, referencing two-lane county roads like in the Highlands.

He believes part of the problem is that drivers adopt a mindset to always drive at or above the posted maximum speed limit regardless of the season or the conditions.

While teaching, he tells his students that the posted limits are the maximum speed one should travel at and is related to when it is "ideal conditions."

"As soon as ideal conditions are no longer there, once you've gone into night time, rain, in particular snow, that maximum speed doesn't apply anymore. That's a max under ideal conditions," he said.

Law said there is a favourite saying at his school: Any fool can drive fast. Smart drivers know when not to.

He adds it's important for people to remember that the driver's license issued by the province does not mean you possess all the skills to operate a vehicle.

"What the [Ministry of Transportation of Ontario] is giving us for driving licenses and saying you're a licensed driver is the equivalent of a Grade 8 level of education and there is so much more to learn and that's our goal. We try to take every driver from that Grade 8 level of driver education to a college level," he said.

He said proof of his claim is how he has taught hundreds of federal and provincial government employees, including MTO staff, to drive better.

Despite how auto manufacturers place their marketing efforts to promote the latest "safety features" on their vehicles, such as all-wheel-drive, it creates a false sense of security for drivers, who are led to believe it ensures greater traction.

"The amount of traction you have is a factor of the tire surface and the road surface. It has nothing to do with you putting power through the tire. Putting power through a tire doesn't give that tire more grip. So we like to tell them all-wheel-drive is a performance feature. It's magnificent for getting you going, but it does nothing to help you stop and steer and that's not the message the manufacturers are putting out," he said.

He said the technology of the feature is truly a wonder at its effectiveness, but "it can mask how slippery the road is. What we say to people is, 'If you're in a two-wheeled drive vehicle and you start on a slippery road and your car slips and slithers you've got the message right away: Holy, we're on a slippery road.' But the all-wheel-drive technology can mask how slippery that road is. Until you try to stop and steer and then it's too late."

Part of the safe operation of a vehicle, includes knowing your vehicle, whether it has ABS or it has lane departure warning. It's not about relying on these safety features as much as working with them and being mindful while driving, he adds. He also lists lane departure warning and blind spot indicators as other safety features that shouldn't be relied upon for safe operation.

When it comes to anti-lock brakes, it's important to not resort to poor driving habits such as pumping the brakes. He recommends drivers lock up the wheels when on ice so it takes advantage of the technology.

"The computer is pumping the brakes upwards of 40 times a second and we as humans would be lucky to be able to do it four times a second, so pumping the brakes is not helping in any way. It's more or less defeating what the computer is already doing," he said.

From video footage he has seen and his experience, he said ABS will actually increase braking time on ice and snow when compared to brakes without the feature because of the pumping action happening.

The key to this is knowing and working with what you have.

"It does afford a driver a chance to brake and steer at the same time if they are trained to do that properly," he said. "It also helps a vehicle to stop in a straight line, which is helpful on road surfaces that have varying degrees of friction for grip level."

Also, a factor in safe travel includes knowing what the conditions of the roads are en route to a destination. The province provides up-to-date information about whether a road is completely or partially covered with snow, or if there is a collision with its app 511 (511on.ca).

It seems obvious, but a key aspect to safe driving is vision, Law said.

During the winter, there can be snow and ice on the windshield, the rear window, the driver and passenger windows. It's important to clear anything that may obstruct during the winter or any season. It's difficult to avoid something on the road if you can't see it, he adds.

"We're strong advocates of when you

see DRIVING page 29

Gord, Kathryn and staff would like to remind you that Peace, Love & Joy are essential this year!
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Shopping for the season

Shoppers had a diverse selection of gift ideas to choose from while shopping at the first ever Haliburton Christmas Market on Saturday, Dec. 5 at the Royal Canadian Legion in Haliburton. Start-up Highlands company, Beyond the Barn organized the event, which included 15 vendors that sold decor, crafts and arts items produced by local creators./ DARREN LUM Staff

COVID-19 protocols, which included mask wearing, one way traffic and capacity limits, were implemented at the first ever Haliburton Christmas Market on Saturday, Dec. 5 at the Royal Canadian Legion in Haliburton. There's a hope to hold this event next year, but organizers would like to add a "winter village" style event at Head Lake Park for the same day.

Driving a vehicle 'doesn't come naturally'

from page 28

get out to drive your vehicle clean all the snow off your vehicle, because what's on your roof will end up on your back window and then you'll be partially blind, which is never a good thing," he said.

Driving a vehicle isn't something that comes naturally.

From Law's experience, he said many people have a tendency to look low, which he believes originates to the early stages of human evolution when looking low could help with avoiding things while on foot.

"Looking low meant we weren't tripping on things. But that hardwired looking low means when we're travelling 88 feet per second it's much too low so we need to make ourselves look higher. It's something we have to work at. It doesn't come natural," he said.

When you look higher, it will provide a broader scan at the horizon to evaluate situations with greater understanding to allow for more reaction time, he adds.

Overcome the reaction to steer at what you're trying to avoid.

Through training, a driver will learn to work with what we do naturally.

"We don't steer with our hands. We steer with our eyes because our hands will follow our eyes," he said.

Drivers can protect each other and help with reducing collisions on the roads.

In 2018, there were 1,743 fatalities on the roads, as reported by Transport Canada.

One adopted fallacy by drivers is how most drivers believe the danger on the road isn't them, but other drivers.

"That is by far the most common attitude we come across when we're talking to motorists," he said.

He continues and said, "What drivers need to realize is they are everybody else's other driver."

The Anglican Parish of Haliburton
A community following Jesus
Instead of gathering in person this year,
join the Parish of Haliburton for
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December 24th: Christmas Eve Pageant and Prayer
December 25th: Christmas Morning Worship
All services are available on
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www.haliburtonanglican.org
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All are welcome

Seven-year-old Jaime Holwell helps dad Tom Oliver promote the Haliburton Music Exchange, an initative to help rehome unused musical instruments into the hands of children in Haliburton County. / Photo submitted by Tom Oliver

Dusting off forgotten musical instruments for kids

SUE TIFFIN
County Life Staff

A new initiative to bring loved but unused instruments into the hands of kids throughout the county is only a few days old, but already an inventory is growing and a couple of guitars have found new homes.

Haliburton resident Tom Oliver said the idea started "pretty much on a whim," when he saw a post from a fellow resident looking to gift her guitars to someone who needed them. Oliver works for Shopify, an e-commerce company, and is skilled at making websites.

"The lightbulb kind of came on and I thought, this wouldn't be that hard, to put it together and just see who else has got instruments out there, just kicking around in their house," he said. "I've been collecting guitars for years, and I'm as bad as anyone else in terms of having all these dusty instruments in corners. The idea just popped into my head – why don't we see if we can round up all these instruments and get them into the hands of some kids?"

And so the Haliburton Music Exchange was launched, with a website listing inventory currently available, and Oliver arranging signage to bring attention to the drop-off and pick-up point - his home at 1003 Bolender by the Lake Drive, across from Curry Chevrolet Buick GMC Ltd. off of County Road 21. It's all happening fast, but Oliver hopes it might get instruments into homes for Christmas.

"On the one hand you have all these people that are in the spirit of Christmas giving, and we've got also these people who are having a hard time making ends meet and finding a present they can afford for their kids," he said. "It wasn't even that that was in my mind when I first started, but as I was thinking on it I thought, this is perfect timing."

Quickly, he began receiving offers for instruments, as well as positive feedback from those who appreciate the idea.

"The response has been unbelievable," said Oliver. "I've already got at least 10 guitars that have been donated, clarinets, flutes, some harmonicas, hand drums, there's just all kinds of stuff that is slowly filtering through. Well, I say slowly, but not even, actually – this has all been within three or four days."

He's even had an offer of a donation from HaliUkes, and hopes to have a section on the site to promote that business – as well as others in the area that offer instruments and music-related accessories in the hopes that those who start to learn an instrument will continue supporting local options when it comes time to restring or upgrade. He also plans on launching a resource site linking to online explanations and guides, and also a directory of music lessons – some instructors have already reached out offering to help, perhaps with an online group session.

"It's one thing to give a kid a guitar, but if you don't give them any lessons, then you know, it doesn't really give them a very good starting point," said Oliver.

The possibilities are endless, but Oliver laughs: "I literally just built the site three days ago," he said. "It's very much the beginning, very much trying to build up inventory right now, that's our main focus ... This is obviously a very long-term thing, and I'm not too worried about what we're going to be able to do in a couple of weeks but it would be really nice to try to get enough that it has some impact on the holidays this year."

The process to choose an instrument is easy, said Oliver, with the site offering pages to scroll through, images of donated items to click on, and a standard check-out option but without a need to give any sort of credit card details – the instruments are free of charge. Contact details enable Oliver to get in touch to arrange pick-up.

While he won't be limiting anyone from picking out an instrument, Oliver said he does hope people will come for the right reasons.

"I kind of have to put my trust in people to take if they need to take," he said. "Whether that person was financially able to do it or not, my attitude is, it still got an instrument into somebody's hands that wasn't being used and there's a chance that instrument is going to be used now. I don't really see how that's a negative."

He hopes those who can, will donate toward helping with the cost of strings, giving back into the program.

And for now, any instrument, or music-related accessory like tuners, strings, sheet music – is welcome. While he's opted not to move and store pianos or organs, he's happy to bridge the gap between buyer and seller – or giver and taker – by posting it on the site.

"If it's something that someone can use to play music, we'll take it," he said.

If, by chance, an instrument isn't being used after being picked up, Oliver recommends bringing it back to circulate in the program again, or trading it for something else.

"You can't push this kind of stuff on a kid," he said. "Either they get into it or not. If you're not using it, bring it back for the same reason you came and picked it up. Pass this off to somebody else, and don't let it just go sit in the corner of your house."

He acknowledges there's a financial barrier for many kids who want to play an instrument, but hopes that by offering a chance to try it, the interest might stay with someone for life.

"I grew up in a home where my parents collected instruments, that was something they loved to do, I grew up in a house filled with everything you can imagine – cellos, harps, pianos, everything," he said. "I write music. We've got a little seven-year-old at home, she sees me writing music, she's writing music with her friends every night on Zoom, and just watching her have that spark to pick up a guitar and write a song, it's awesome. I look at it and, this is amazing. The idea that that would be happening in other households is kind of inspiring."

Oliver has been coming to the area since he himself was a kid, and bought a house here about five years ago. While his work on a sailboat initially kept him out of the area, with online work with Shopify he is now able to be at home.

"When I finally got a chance to settle down and kind of be here, I just thanked the gods every day that I had bought when I did, before the market went ballistic, and that I can call this home now," he said. "I've lived all over the place and this is the only place I've ever really considered to be home."

He's also involved with the Haliburton County Youth Sailing Association, which addresses youth mental health through sailing. Though the in-person group was limited this year in how it could operate, Oliver said the Haliburton Music Exchange doesn't have any sort of similar barrier due to the pandemic. Now, he just hopes it works.

"It's just the anticipation of seeing if we're going to get the inventory or not," said Oliver. "I'm just hoping there's enough stuff out there that we're able to build up an inventory that gives us some traction and really makes this thing, a thing. Like I'm really at the whim of the community right now. The success of this completely depends upon everybody saying, 'hey, do I have a dusty guitar, or do I have a dusty anything, and am I willing to give it up.' If that happens and we get lots of inventory, then this thing's going to fly."

For more information, visit HaliburtonMusicExchange.com, or Haliburton Music Exchange on Facebook.

Archie Stouffer Elementary School

Students from Mrs. Tokar and Ms. Card's Kindergarten class at Archie Stouffer Elementary School in Minden have had a busy week preparing for the festive season. The kids participated in several different Christmas-themed activities, including writing letters to Santa Claus, decorating Christmas tree pine cones, and painting different shaped salt dough ornaments. /Photos Submitted.

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INSIDE THIS WEEK:

SIX POINTS AND COUNTING
Cody Hodgson making his talents felt as Team Canada takes on the world

1ST CHRISTMAS IN THE SNOW
Rotary exchange student from Taiwan isn't complaining about all the snow

27-YEAR-OLD BOOK LAUNCH
It's taken Gord Kidd a long time to publish his book but it's worth the wait

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2008 — Vol. 125 No. 52 $1.25 INCL. GST

Dave Burton is new county warden

CHAD INGRAM
Staff Reporter

Haliburton County has a new warden.

Highlands East Reeve Dave Burton was inaugurated as the county's warden for 2009 at a ceremony in the county council chambers on December 16.

Burton was nominated for the position by Algonquin Highlands Deputy-reeve Tom Gardner, who described Burton as "easy to work with."

The nomination was seconded by Minden Hills Deputy-reeve Cheryl Murdoch.

"I know Dave can do this for us," Murdoch said. "You have to really care. If you're going to do the job right, you've got to get around to see all the people."

No other nominations were made and Burton took the position by acclamation.

After reciting the warden's oath of office, he took the podium to give a short acceptance speech.

"I won't let you down," Burton told the room, which included dozens of guests.

Burton said among his priorities for the upcoming year would be updating the county's official plan, pursuing environmentally

See **Warden** *page 9*

MATT JAMES/Echo

That's right! Only two more days till Christmas!

Kindergarten students Emma Tidey covers her eye while Dante Wilson holds up two fingers in Stuart Baker Elementary School's annual Christmas concert on December 18. Students from Kindergarten to Grade 3 displayed their talents with a little help from their teachers. For more Christmas concert capers turn to page 23.

Toronto to discover Haliburton is one of a kind

JENN WATT
Staff Reporter

Local artists Sandi Luck and Charles O'Neil are two of the 24 artists from Eastern Ontario chosen to attend the Spring 2009 One of a Kind show in Toronto.

The artists are being sponsored by the federal government.

MP Barry Devolin recognized the two Haliburton artists for their unique products at Heritage House Café Thursday afternoon during an announcement of the $125,000 project.

"As an MP ... I appreciate the special flavour artists and artisans [bring] to this community," Devolin said.

Funding for the 24 artists, along with market readiness workshops, was a project that originated in Haliburton with the Haliburton County Development Corporation. Jim Blake, community economic development co-ordinator, along with HCDC vice-chairperson Barb Bolin, conceived of a program that would make a special place for Eastern Ontario artists at the One of a Kind show.

"It's a wonderful opportunity for people to take the next leap in their work," Bolin said at Heritage House Café.

She thanked the federal government for the money and Blake for being the "perfect stick handler" on the project.

The two said they wanted to create an export market for Haliburton, and Eastern Ontario, art and this is just the beginning of a concerted effort.

At the show there will be a designated section for Eastern Ontario that shoppers can wan-

See **One of a Kind** *page 10*

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